





















Pamphlets on East India Company

VI-5

1813

*Sas.*  
**Librarian**

**Uttarpara Joykrishna Public Library**  
**Govt. of West Bengal**















**THE**  
**PRELIMINARY DEBATE**  
**AT THE**  
**EAST-INDIA HOUSE,**  
*On Tuesday, the 5th January, 1813,*  
**ON THE**  
**NEGOCIATION WITH HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS**  
**RELATIVE TO A**  
***RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER;***  
**WITH**  
**AN APPENDIX**  
**CONTAINING ALL THE LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS**  
**REFERRED TO UPON THE SUBJECT.**

---

**BY AN IMPARTIAL REPORTER.**

---

LONDON  
Printed for BLACK, PARRY, and CO. Leadenhall Street.

1813.



---

Printed by Cox and Baylis, Great Queen Street,  
Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

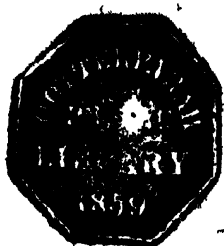
---

*The subject of the following Debate is of so important a nature, involving the existence of the East-India Company with the prosperity of this Country, that the Reporter feels it an incumbent duty to present it to the Public. He is aware of the interest it must necessarily excite in the breasts of men devoted to the honour, the justice, and the happiness of Great Britain, and he has endeavoured to preserve the sentiments of the several speakers as faithfully, as the hasty sketches of the pen, and the recorded recollections of memory, will allow; and he pledges himself to report the ensuing Debate, which is expected to be the most animating, as it certainly will be the most momentous, with accurate fidelity, having engaged the most eminent short-hand writers expressly for that purpose.*









## PRELIMINARY DEBATE,

8c. 8c.

---

A General Court of PROPRIETORS was held at the East India House on Tuesday, January the 5th, 1813, for the purpose of taking into consideration the several communications and documents relative to the late negotiation between his *Majesty's Ministers* and the *Committee of Correspondence*, respecting a RENEWAL OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER.

The Chair was taken by Sir HUGH INGLIS at twelve o'clock; when the minutes of the last Court having been read as usual, he stated to a large, opulent, and respectable assembly, that the Court of Proprietors had been called, in order that he might submit to their consideration the communications of His Majesty's Government to the Directors, on a most important subject—*the Renewal of the Company's Charter*. From the papers to be laid before them he was sorry to



observe, that the result of those communications was most unfavourable to the views and to the interests of the Company.—The last communication on the subject was contained in a letter from Lord Buckinghamshire; but received the night before, at so very late an hour, it was impossible for him to communicate with others, or indeed to bestow upon it himself all the consideration its importance required. He did not, of course, find himself at liberty to express the sentiments and feelings of the Court of Directors; but, for his own part, he could have no hesitation to confess, that this last letter had made on his mind a most serious and fearful impression.

The first paper laid upon the table contained the minutes of the Secret Committee of Correspondence (No. I. in the Appendix), dated November the 27th, 1812, wherein it was reported to the Committee, that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had held a conference, that very morning, with the President of the Board of Commissioners, on the subject of renewing the Company's Charter, at which his Lordship (Lord Buckinghamshire) declared it to be the intention of His Majesty's Government, not to abandon the proposition of allowing a direct trade between India and the outports of the United



Kingdom, subject to modifications and restrictions—requesting a conference on the subject with Lord Liverpool and himself. The paper proceeds to state, that after communicating with the Committee of Correspondence,

A letter from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman (No. II. Appendix), dated November 21, 1812, was dispatched to Lord Buckinghamshire, acquainting him, that the Committee received the communication with the deepest concern; that such a measure, even in a most limited and restricted degree, would be highly prejudicial to the public revenue, injurious to the East-India Company, and detrimental to the prosperity of the merchants, manufacturers, traders, and other numerous bodies interested with the commerce of India.

Lord Buckinghamshire's next letter was then read (No. III. Appendix), dated November 28, 1812, requesting that Lord Liverpool, and other members of the Board of Commissioners, might be present at the conference with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

The next document (No. IV.) was a minute of the Secret Court of Directors, held on the 2d day of December 1812, stating that an unreserved conference had been held between His Majesty's Ministers and the Committee of Cor-



responddence, wherein it was agreed no minutes should be taken.

The next minute (No. V. Appendix) was of a Secret Committee, held on the 15th day of December, merely stating, two conferences had been held between His Majesty's Ministers and the Committee, *viz.* on the 5th and 12th of December, 1812 ; but no communication to the Court appeared necessary.

It appeared from the minute (No. VI. Appendix), that the Court, adverting to a statement made, with their approbation, to a General Court, respecting the late conferences on the subject of renewing the Charter, the Court deemed it proper His Majesty's Ministers should be apprized the Court were of opinion, unanimously and decidedly, that the admission of the imports from India to the outports of the United Kingdom would be ruinous and pernicious in its consequences.

A report was then read (No. VII. Appendix) from a Committee of the whole Court, dated December 18th, 1812, stating that the proposition was pregnant with ruin to the Company, rendering them incapable of performing the functions allotted to them, either commercially or politically.



Another document (No. VIII. Appendix) stated this resolution had been communicated to the President of the Board of Commissioners.

Then followed the letters (No. IX. and X. Appendix): after which the Chairman ordered the last letter of Lord Buckinghamshire, before referred to, and received the previous night, to be read (No. XI. Appendix). This letter was dated January the 4th, 1813, stating, that, however His Majesty's Ministers might wish to be frank and explicit on the subject of a Renewal of the Charter, they could not engage in the controversy as a party, to which the objections of the committee would ultimately lead:—conceived His Majesty's Ministers had discharged their duty, by expressing the terms on which they thought it expedient a renewal of the Company's Charter should be recommended to Parliament:—that His Majesty's Ministers had had personal communications with others, who thought themselves interested in the general question; and were not called upon to give an answer, in detail, to the objections of the Company:—that petitions had been presented to Parliament for opening the trade:—in respect to points of regulation, every thing submitted to Parliament would have for its basis *the extension of the import trade*:—he was not aware that any alteration in the go-



vernment of India was intended:—how far the extension might endanger the trade and safety of the British government in India, and the British constitution at home, must be submitted to the wisdom of Parliament:—if the government could not be carried on without the Company, then the Company must remain in its present state; there was no alternative:—no alteration, however, in the government was intended, and all traders would be subject to local regulations.

The *Chairman* rose, and observed that the manner and the importance of the letter now before them, suggested the propriety of its being read a second time. (*Applauses.*)

He proceeded to inform them, that all the papers would be printed and delivered the next day.—He then said,

“ I am happy to declare, that the Court of Directors is ever ready and anxious to give every information in their power to the Court of Proprietors. That which is their duty and their desire at all times, becomes incalculably so, at so momentous a crisis as the present, when the interests and very vitality of the Company are at stake.—It would be highly desirable that the opinions and feelings of the Proprietors should be known and diffused, as quickly and as widely as possible ;



but I am sure that, in the present instance, they will act as they always have done, with a deliberate reflection: they will not rush into a hasty decision, without a cautious and severe investigation. It is my recommendation, that the question should be calmly and dispassionately considered in your closets. It will neither be expedient nor wise to form a judgement on the impulse of the moment. Not that I or the Directors would dissuade or prevent immediate discussion: we wish to know the spontaneous sentiments of every Proprietor—we do not deprecate discussion, we anxiously desire it; but we wish to defer decision. Numerous and respectable as the Court now is, there are many not present of unquestionable talent and interest, whose opinions it were most desirable to be acquainted with, whose arguments it would be gratifying to hear, and who would naturally wish to have an opportunity of expressing their feelings:—it would not be doing them justice, if the question were to be finally determined, without affording them time to reflect deeply, and explain themselves fully, upon the subject.—Dispassionate inquiry, calm deliberation, comprehensive reflection, were to be recommended, at a crisis so anxious and so awful.—The Directors, as a body, have had no time to communicate, no opportunity to form an opi-



nion, and of course no opportunity to offer one, on the subject of this last letter: but the Proprietors can be at no loss to guess what their feelings are.—I will not take upon myself to speak for them; I do not explain their opinion.—The Directors have had no time for meeting to discuss particulars and to consolidate their judgments, in the interval of late last night and eleven o'clock to day; but I, for myself, declare, that I see nothing in Lord Buckinghamshire's last letter, that should persuade us to depart from our former sentiments and resolutions.—We would have met earlier, at any hour whatever, had it been possible to have summoned a meeting; but we have not been able to see each other till our attendance at this Court was required. We shall be glad to hear the sentiments of any Proprietor disposed to indulge us with them now; and to collect what your opinions are, on the subject of an ultimate discussion."

*Mr. Rigby* admitted the necessity of calm and deliberate reflection; but if the moment was awful, and the crisis a fearful one, they were calculated to call forth all the impulse of present feeling, and all the energies of nature.—He applauded the attention, the perseverance, and the talent of the Directors on a trying occasion. The manly and discreet part they



had taken deserved not merely their warmest support but their thanks by acclamation. They must all feel the deepest regret at the unfortunate issue of the negotiation: and many would participate with him in feelings of a still stronger nature, on the perusal of Lord Buckinghamshire's most extraordinary letter. His Lordship truly did not condescend to give them any information, but referred them to the petitions on the table of the House of Commons. He was astonished, and full of alarm and indignation, to find any Minister in this country daring enough to make such a declaration, and in a certain degree to upbraid the Company for assuming the patronage of India. The greatest men this country has lately known, Mr. Pitt, and the late Lord Melville, had held and avowed the opinion, that an Administration seizing upon the patronage of India, would infallibly destroy the constitution of this country. Taking a broad and steady view of the whole correspondence, he saw no prospect afforded, no argument adduced, that could persuade any rational mind to wish any change, any deviation of policy, in respect of India: nor, from the face of the documents, did it appear, that the Directors had given even the shadow of occasion



for drawing down upon them such contemptuous treatment as they had received from Government.

*Mr. R. Thornton* (the Deputy Chairman) observed, that his opinions stood upon record: they were unequivocally given, they were universally known; still, on such a momentous occasion, he could not satisfy himself, he should not do his duty if he did not express his present feelings.—The trust committed to his hands was an awful one: it was his determined intention to exercise the functions of office faithfully and intrepidly. He had received the acquiescence and support of the Company in all the negociations with His Majesty's Government; and while he received such approbation, he would neither betray their interests nor dishonor himself. (*Applauses.*)—Much management and considerable ingenuity had, for several years past, been misapplied, in seducing the opinions and agitating the interests of men. False expectations had been raised, and visionary passions tampered with, in order to induce Petitions to the House of Commons. Air blown bubbles in all their gaudy colourings, specious as they were empty, were flying in every direction, to astonish the ignorant and allure the unwary.—Terms to which opprobrium had long been applied by custom, had been wrested from their proper meaning, in order to stamp an odium on



what was technically, legally, and justly called, the “well regulated Monopoly” of the East India Company—and all for what? to acquire an extension of trade for individuals, which must inevitably terminate in their final destruction; the gay and splendid scenery would soon fade away, and all their speculations would become as light, as the bubbles of imagination which so fatally deluded them. What was this universal panacea, by which this general commerce was to be established?—why, the destruction of the only commerce in the world which remains entire and unshaken:—the destruction of that commerce, which while all other Trading had fallen to pieces, Bonaparte eagerly coveted, as the dearest jewel of his crown: that commerce, which has been the envy of our enemies, the pride of our country, the admiration of mankind. What did this enemy say? “I want Ships, Colonies, and Commerce.” The ships, the colonies, and commerce of this Company he is hovering over; hovering over, ready to devour. Well, if the trade is to be opened, our ships will be transformed into revenue cutters. We might keep our colonies, perhaps, but colonization would destroy our territory. As to commerce, legitimate, honorable commerce, it would sink into illicit trade. Our merchants, such of



them who are now dazzled with the gold and silver of India and China, would return to the iron of Birmingham and Sheffield.

The propositions of Government were too irrational to be lasting ; as the cause of the Company was just, it required them only to be firm, in order to be successful.

And what is the time when this great commercial revolution is proposed? the time when a bright star of hope had illumined the northern hemisphere, the promised and welcome harbinger of general peace.—If such a peace could be produced on safe and honorable terms ; if the usual habits of commerce should again return to us ; when the deliverance of Europe is effected, when the loud and general congratulations of joy are rapturously exchanging—how would the East India Company appear, how would they congratulate each other?—in the lamentation, that while commerce is raising her head and smiling all around her, her merchants are despoiled and ruined, her hopes set for ever, her interests wantonly sacrificed to the wild schemes of visionary experiment. It would be much better for them at once to wind up their concerns, to give up all thoughts of India, and seek for other pursuits, than linger on a few years in gradual decay, and then sink into nothing.—He hoped



they would now act, so that, on future reflection, they should not accuse themselves of deserting or neglecting their duty.

*The Rev. Mr. Thirlwall* acceded to the importance and magnitude of the question. He allowed that the great object, the uniting indissolubly the government and the trade of India, were matters of the first consideration; but there were others too, which though of minor importance, might judiciously be added to the weight already in the scale of this great question:—he meant the innumerable families which would be thrown into instant ruin in the immediate circle of the metropolis; the industry that would be palsied, the charities that would be frozen up, the entire depopulation of various parishes, which must inevitably sink in the same ruin with the East-India Company.—If the government and territory were reserved to them, the trade would be divided and dispersed, far from the homes and reach of those whose whole dependance will be divided and dispersed with it:—he called therefore on the justice and humanity of His Majesty's Government, not to press a wanton experiment of certain distress for uncertain advantage:—a distress incalculable in its misery; an advantage, even in its utmost success, trifling and worthless:—he trusted, therefore, that Government would give



up the measure, before the Company should be compelled to come to a final decision.

*Mr. Kennard Smith* could not withhold his testimony of praise to the wise and able conduct of the Directors during the negociation with His Majesty's Ministers; and he trusted that many other persons present would express their feelings and their sentiments, in order to enable the Chairman to decide upon the answer which ought to be returned to Lord Buckinghamshire's letter.— If they looked back to the charter of James the First, about two centuries ago, they would find the grant was *for ever*, unless it should be found prejudicial to these realms. Is it so found? if not, there can be no reason why any of its provisions and privileges should be taken away. Let it be *proved* to be prejudicial;—that would be perhaps a fair ground for opening its trade or abolishing it altogether,—but *prove* it first, and do not let assertion and power usurp the place of argument and justice.—He was well aware it could not be proved; but he was not convinced that opening the trade would not be prejudicial to these realms. His conviction was to the contrary. From his practical knowledge he felt the most decided assurance that the measure was fraught with destruction, not to the Company only, but to those speculators who



were now revelling in imagination on the spoils of the East. If the trade should be opened to the outports, it would be much better for the Company to resign its charter, to sell its territory and possessions, its buildings and its stores, and every individual of it retire to the occupations of private life. The China trade alone, could not support the expences of the Charter. His Majesty's Ministers could not have seriously reflected on the number of seamen supplied to the navy by East-India shipping.—He adverted to the time of Queen Elizabeth, when not more than six ships sailed to India; and to their present number, a number which supplies an average of 7400 seamen for the navy, exclusive of Lascars. He conceived they had an unquestionable claim on government for the value of their freehold in India, which they enjoyed by a right as firm and unshaken as any freehold which could be held in this country.

*Mr. R. Grant* rose and said :

Mr. Chairman,—Encouraged by the invitation which you have held out to the individual proprietors, to take a part in this discussion, I venture to offer myself, not with any purpose of entering into a detailed consideration of the particular measure respecting the outports, which has been the immediate occasion of calling us together, for that subject will better be discussed



on a future day; but in order to express my surprise at the singular letter with which we have been favoured by one of His Majesty's Ministers; a letter, in which they are pleased explicitly to inform us, that they have every disposition to honor us with a free and unreserved communication of their *sentiments*, but are not at all disposed to communicate their *arguments*. The question, Sir, to which we are reduced by this letter, is indeed one of the utmost seriousness and importance. It is no other than this: whether the Company shall throw themselves on the justice of parliament and of the nation, in a contest with His Majesty's executive government; or whether all the political interests of India, and of England, as connected with India, shall be made the subject of commercial experiment?

Surprised as I am with the tone of the Minister's letter, I profess myself still more astonished at the matter. We are there told that, unless we accede to the measure proposed, it will be open to the consideration and decision of parliament, whether the political interests involved in the government of India, cannot be effectually provided for under some other system of administration than the present. Open to the consideration and decision of parliament! I thought, Sir, that parliament had considered and decided



the question long ago. I have always of late understood it to be the general opinion of the government, the parliament, and the nation, that the system of the Company was in every view the most eligible organ for the management of the great and complicated interests in question. But I suppose this annunciation of Ministers to be a sort of commentary on a sentiment in the former letter of Lord Buckinghamshire; where he states that, although it be *expedient* to leave the government of India in the hands of the Company, yet there is a *limit* to that expediency. Now, Sir, as I have ever understood that the expediency of the system in the contemplation of Ministers respected the people of India at least as much as the nation at home, I can translate the proposition of Lord Buckinghamshire only into this, that there is a limit to the expediency of governing well:—there is a limit to the care and attention which we are bound to bestow on the security and welfare of the immense population confided to our management. And what, Sir, is that limit? The commercial convenience of the outports.—True, we are under the most solemn obligation to conduct with vigilance and fidelity the administration of that vast empire: but, imperative, sacred, and indispensable as this obligation is,



we shall be too strict, too zealous in our construction of it, if, in the prosecution of our object, we compel a vessel which has cleared outwards from Bristol, to discharge her homeward cargo in the Thames. Thus do ministers weigh the ledger-books of the outports against the great Charter of the rights and happiness of fifty millions of men!—(*Applause.*)

Disclaiming, Sir, as I have once already done, any discussion at the present moment respecting the admittance of the outports into the import-trade of India, I will yet just ask, whether, considering this, not as an individual and insulated measure, but in connexion with past events, the Company have no solid ground of objection against it? Have the Company no ground of objection against it, as being one further step in that series of progressive encroachments, which have for some years been taking place on their privileges? Have they no right, without reference to this specific development of the general principle, to resist it on the ground that, if they do not make a stand somewhere, they will lose all?—(*Applause*). There was a period, when the Company were compelled to contend with Government for all their privileges, commercial and political. That attack on them failed; and it almost seems as if Ministers had converted the



siege into a blockade. First, we were obliged to provide a quantity of extra-tonnage for the individuals:—then, the trade was to be thrown open to private ships: then, the outports were to be admitted into the export-trade;—now the outports are to be admitted into the import-trade. And I beg leave to observe, that I mention these, not as encroachments on our commercial privileges, though even in that view they might well bear remark; but as encroachments on the resources of the Company, and as therefore more and more trenching on that fund, on which the Company must rely for the due discharge of their political duties. If we are to judge, according to the rule of all worldly wisdom, from the past to the future, is it possible to doubt what will be the next step? According to the present intention, the free traders are to conduct their concerns, subject to the regulations of the local governments of India, and they are to be completely debarred from the trade of China. Can there be a doubt that their next attack will be on these obstacles? To do them justice, they make no secret of their wishes. And the imprescriptible right of Britons to a free trade, commercial liberty, the right of locomotion, all those topics on which the advocates of the private traders are apt to dilate, somewhat more extravagantly



than wisely, will be exactly as good then as at the present hour.

I do not mean to insinuate that the Government,—and I would observe that, by that term, I do not mean this or that Government, but the National Government,—entertain a deliberate and systematic design of annihilating the Company. But it is in the nature of things. It is in the nature of power to be encroaching and aggressive. And if this train of consecutive aggressions is to continue, it is too easy to perceive what will be its termination. Left in possession of all our political functions, but stripped one by one, of all the means and facilities which we possess for the exercise of those functions, we shall at length be compelled to resign every thing without a struggle, and shall then have the comfort of being told that it is a voluntary surrender. The edifice will be permitted to remain entire and untouched; no hostile hand ostensibly stretched out against it; no warlike engine threatening its walls; but, in the mean time, it is gradually undermined, and, when it collapses with a great ruin, it will be said to have fallen by its own weight. The familiar but lively and happy illustration employed by a great departed orator in Parliament, may be applied to this subject;



we shall be checkmated with all our pieces on the board.—(*Applause.*)

I cannot help thinking, Sir, that, in the present crisis, it would be well to remind Ministers and the public, of the services which the Company have rendered both to this country and to India. On this head, indeed, the greatest misrepresentations prevail. That such services have, in fact, been rendered, not one of your antagonists ventures to deny; but it is not uncommonly insinuated in the publications which have appeared against you, that they were the result of accident, or that the merit of them exclusively belongs to the enlightened men whom you have chanced to employ. The Company, in the mean time, are charged with having no concern for the interests, either of their country or of their subjects, with being wholly absorbed in a selfish regard for their advantage.

If it be indeed true, that the Company are occupied solely by an attachment to their own interests, I yet do not know that the advocates of free trade are exactly the persons the best authorised to reproach them with that failing. I am by no means persuaded, that the motives by which those gentlemen are actuated are of a much more exalted nature.—(*Applause.*)



Is it, however, the fact, that the Company have no claims on the gratitude either of their country or of their subjects? Let history answer that question. I regret—I do not palliate—the disorders which, in some instances, took place at the commencement of their government as a territorial power. Those were disorders, however, naturally incident to a recent acquisition of dominion, especially to an acquisition accompanied by the strongest individual temptations; and they were, as soon as possible, corrected by the Company at home. But, while these misdeeds, whatever they were, are, on every occasion, studiously trumpeted forth, the eminent services rendered by the Company, both to this country and to that, are completely overlooked, or are ascribed to any other cause than good intention. Why, Sir, when, about the time of the civil commotions in England, the Indo-British trade, from the effect of those troubles, was for near thirty years in hourly danger of annihilation;—when, at other periods, both anterior and subsequent, that trade was in hourly danger of extinction from the formidable malice of European rivals;—when it weathered those storms by exertions of fortitude and perseverance unparalleled in the commercial annals of the world;—do the Company, who conducted it, deserve no



credit for their management and public spirit? When the Indo-British settlements were, for twenty years together, engaged in an arduous struggle with the hostility of France, and that hostility directed by some of the ablest public functionaries, civil and military, that France has ever produced; when they endured through that dreadful season; when they not only endured through it, but, having entered it as a set of comparatively insignificant ports, emerged from it an empire; do the counsels and conduct of the Company, who supplied the means of these achievements, deserve no praise for the result? Then,—as to the inhabitants of India,—when Lord Clive repaired to that country, for the second time, as a governor,—when he went out in the character, no longer of a soldier, but of a pacificator,—to check irregularities, to reform abuses, to consolidate the dominions acquired, and to secure the rights and welfare of the natives,—did he undertake this important service by accident, or was he expressly delegated to it by the votes of a triumphant majority of this very court? When, afterwards, the same illustrious man,—and the incident deserves notice, as not wanting applicability to some parts of the present discussion,—sensible of the irregularities and atrocities committed by the free



traders up the country, and anxious to hush the groans of the suffering natives, chased the whole tribe of those oppressors to Calcutta ;—was this act purely the emanation of his own great mind, or do your records exhibit the precise instructions which he had received from the Company at home for the accomplishment of the reformation in question ? I cannot help mentioning another illustrious and revered name, a name dear (I doubt not) to every individual present. When Lord Cornwallis adopted the measure of the perpetual settlement,—and though there still subsist some differences of opinion respecting the policy of that measure, there never were two opinions as to its magnanimity, did he act by chance, or entirely from himself, or are not the express instructions of the Company on record, in which they enjoin on him the full application of his comprehensive judgment, with the view of ameliorating the condition of the natives in that very respect ? All these laws and regulations, under the protection of which the natives repose,—which secure to them a pure administration of justice, a freedom from European competition in the purchase and management of land, a tranquil enjoyment of their property,—the Magna Charta, as they may be called, and Bill of Rights of the population of Hindostan,—did they spring



up spontaneously, did the servants of the Company call them from the ground by a stamp of the foot ?—or are your voluminous records pregnant with evidence to shew, that the principles of all those improvements had been the previous subjects of your deep and anxious deliberation, of your minute and positive orders ?

I have the firmest belief, Sir, in the capabilities of individual energy to effect mighty things. But, at the same time, it is plain that a public functionary can accomplish little, unless he is countenanced and supported by his principals. The great men to whom I have alluded, acted greatly, but whence did they acquire their first movement ?—whence was derived the first impulse of their great actions ? Why, Sir, from within these very walls which are now decorated with their effigies. You have a right to consecrate their dead renown ; for you formed their living greatness \*.—(*Applause.*)

The question then recurs, Sir ; is all this system of establishments, the fruit of so much labour, achieved by so much solicitude, matured

## E

\* The wall of the room in which the Court of Proprietors meet has niches, in which are placed the statues of Lord Clive, Lord Cornwallis, Sir Eyre Coote, and other eminent men.



by time, justified by experience, to be made the sport of a commercial experiment? Grant all the commercial arguments of our opponents; but is it possible not to see that a commercial measure may lead to the most fatal political consequences? That such is the strong infallible tendency of the particular measure before us, is clearly proved in the correspondence of the Directors with the Government,—proved by arguments, to which the Government refuse an answer. It menaces the subversion of the constitution of India; and, permit me to add, by no very remote consequence, the subversion of that of England also.

It is curious to observe, Sir, how differently men estimate the evil of political changes in this country and in India. In England we have a constitution which is the work of ages, and the wonder of the world. For this constitution we glory in cherishing even a bigotted attachment, and if any innovator proposes for our adoption a measure which appears to touch its fundamental principles, we hear him no longer;—we cry, “away with your commercial calculations! we cannot afford such an experiment! *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari!*” Thus we all act—and we act well. But what, meantime is our conduct respecting India? There, also, is a con-



stitution, the slow creation of years ; a constitution which has not, indeed, attained theoretical perfection,—perhaps not even all the practical perfection of which it is capable,—I am not competent to judge of that,—but of which I will yet be bold to say, that, considering the peculiar circumstances of the country ; considering the nature and political capacity of the natives ; considering the relations subsisting between the two countries, it is scarcely a less wonderful work, scarcely a less important achievement, than the British constitution itself. Yet when we object to an innovation proposed by ministers, on the ground that it will probably affect the vitals of this constitution, they are pleased gravely to assure us that our apprehensions are *probably* unfounded, and we are charged with a spirit of captiousness, contumacy, and war, because, in a case which is absolutely one of life and death to the natives of Hindostan, we refuse to be put off with contingent remedies and conjectural safeguards — ( *By Assent* ).

Amidst the provincial wit, Sir, which has, during the course of this controversy, been pointed against the Company, I have found it said, that all the reasonings of that body resolve themselves into an argument *ad misericordiam*, —an address to the compassion of the public.



One of these reasonings *ad misericordiam* you have heard from a gentleman below me (Mr. Thirlwal), and I would ask whether it contained nothing of an impressive nature,—nothing to touch the feelings of humanity? For my own part, without the hope and without the desire of rivalling the ingenious mirth to which I have alluded, I will say, not wittily, but gravely, that were I to address the public on the present subject, mine *should* be an argument *ad misericordiam*. It *should* be an appeal to their compassionate feelings:—but to their compassionate feelings not in behalf of the Company, however likely to be ruined by adventurers; nor in behalf of adventurers, however likely to ruin themselves—mine should be an appeal to the compassion of the people of England in favour of the people of India. I would earnestly remind them that a system in which the welfare and happiness of Hindostan, in a political point of view, are essentially bound up, a system admitted to have this character (for never let that be forgotten) on all hands, may, by the rage of commercial speculation, be utterly pulled to pieces in a few years. I would intreat that, in their anxiety to settle the discontents of a comparatively small number of persons at home, they would not run the risk of unsettling the content



and tranquillity of the immense population dependent on them in India. I would beseech them not to be more swayed by the din and tumult which pervades a small part of their own country, than by the profound and uncomplaining stillness which reigns throughout that vast continent. I would implore them to do by the people of India as they would do by themselves; and then I have not the smallest doubt of the result.—(*Long and reiterated applause.*)

*Mr. Smith* (the Bank Director) was of opinion, that the most advisable proceeding in the present stage of the business would be, to adopt the sentiments of the Chairman, and adjourn to an early period.

The *Chairman* signified his concurrence.

*Mr. Kennard Smith* moved, that thanks be given to the Court of Directors, for the firm, zealous, and vigilant conduct which they had hitherto evinced for the interests of the Proprietors, concluding with a resolution of adjournment to the 19th instant.

*Mr. Lewis* requested, that the Resolutions of the General Court of the 5th of May last might be read. (No. XIV. Appendix.)

*Mr. Rigby* thought the document just read, of such importance as to require the most extensive circulation, and enquired whether, in the discussion with Ministers, they had been given to



understand that a modification, with respect to exporting the produce of this country, would be admitted?—and was answered by

The *Chairman*, that the Charter of 1793 permitted an annual exportation of that sort, to the extent of 3000 tons, which extent had never been taken advantage of, the exports principally consisting of wines, which were not the manufacture of this country—at least he hoped not!—(*A laugh.*)

The motion of thanks and adjournment being seconded and put,

*Mr. Hume*, in addressing the *Chairman*, declared it was not his original intention to deliver any opinion on the present subject, but he was induced to depart from that resolution in consequence of the turn which the discussion had taken.—He objected to uniting a vote of thanks to the Directors with the resolution of adjournment—he had not entirely made up his mind whether they deserved praise or censure. From many observations which had been made, it appeared as if the question was not a relation to the outports being admitted to a share of the import trade; that question seemed to him to have been entirely departed from. The language of Ministers was this—you must concede whatever we think necessary, or your Charter will not be renewed. It had been stated in the House of Commons



by the late Mr. Perceval, that certain preliminaries had been agreed upon between the Government and the Company. The Court of Directors had called upon Ministers for their decided answer—an answer had been returned which he certainly could not disapprove. The true question is this,—will the Company consent to the trade being thrown open? in that case Government, it is supposed, will not interfere in the interior administration of India. Ought the port of London, in this general state of commercial privation, to enjoy privileges which no other port possessed? The Company's right to a trade in India was founded on a statute of Parliament, by which the duration of the right was limited.

At this point, the Ministers he thought had done the Directors a proper rub. Without concerning himself with his positions, he admired the eloquence of the gentleman who spoke last (Mr. Fox), and hoped to be gratified with many more of his speeches. He was sensible that he himself had wandered from the subject (*hear, hear*), which was not much a matter of surprise, as it seemed generally to have been lost sight of—he was of opinion as the discussion was to be adjourned, so might the vote of thanks.—*Here were loud cries of Question, Question, when the Chairman requested, that as much praise had been so handsomely bestowed on the Directors, it*



*was but fair to hear what might be alledged against them; it was true policy to hear both sides of a question—when*

*Mr. Hume* resumed—by asking whether the trade to Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, had afforded sufficient means for paying their dividends? Was it proper, was it prudent then to quarrel with Ministers about a trade which he was prepared to prove had for the last fifteen years produced nothing or next to nothing? He was not prepared so say whether the Directors deserved praise or not; he wished for time to consider that point, and might perhaps at their next meeting, be equally disposed with any other gentleman to support a vote of thanks; and with respect to other points introduced into the present discussion, his opinion was, they should be reserved for the consideration of Parliament and the Ministers.

*Mr. Grant* (a Director) said he did not rise to contend for the vote of approbation that had been proposed. He had no wish (and he was sure the gentleman behind the bar had no wish) to carry the Proprietors, in this respect, further than their own spontaneous judgment should incline them to go. But though it had not been his intention, nor he believed the intention of the Directors in general, to offer any opinions to the Proprietors on that day, the speech of the



honourable gentleman, who had just sat down (Mr. Huine), called for some observation. The honourable gentleman had assumed that the question before the Proprietors was, whether they should agree to the proposition of Ministers respecting the outports? Mr. Grant said there was no such question submitted to the Court. The Proprietors had been called together on that day, in order to be made acquainted with the further correspondence which had taken place between His Majesty's Ministers and the Court of Directors, and not to produce any immediate question on the matter of that correspondence, but that the Proprietors, after having had an opportunity of fully considering it, should determine on the time proper to be taken for the consideration of it, and the day on which they should meet again. The only question, in short, before the Court, was the motion recently made for approving the conduct of the Directors. But the honourable gentleman, following his erroneous assumption, had gone on to argue, as if the question respecting the outports were a detached insulated question that might be settled without affecting other great parts of the Indian system. He had supposed indeed, that the object really in dispute, between Government and the Company, was the *Indian Trade*. In both these assumptions the honora-



ble gentleman was mistaken. It was not the trade with India, as such, for which the Company chiefly contended. That trade it was admitted had been of late years no great object of profit. The Company resisted the importation of Indian commodities to the outports, because they apprehended, with great reason, that the consequence would be the smuggling of tea to a large extent, in violation of the Company's China monopoly. And the loss that would hence ensue, was not to be contemplated merely as commercial loss. The China trade was the source of the profit which enabled the Company to pay their dividend, and on the payment of the dividend depended the subsistence of the Company in a state fit for the performance of the high political functions assigned to them. The admission of the imports from India to the outports of England, therefore, involves the political existence of the Company as administrators of the Indian empire. If the honourable gentleman had perused the printed papers with the least attention, he would have found that this was the argument of the Company.

The honourable gentleman had also assumed, that the Directors had demanded a categorical answer from His Majesty's Ministers on the grand question. This was another mistake. They had only asked for the informations on which Ministers had been induced to declare in favour



of the outports, and for the whole detail of the plan which they had formed for the government of British India.

In asking for these things they had asked for nothing new. In the settlement of the Charter of 1793, the eminent men who conducted the national affairs at that time, communicated to the Court of Directors not only the details of their own plan, but the demands of British manufacturers and other persons hostile to the privileges of the Company, with the arguments used by those parties. This was what the Directors had now asked. They were told that the discussions between the merchants claiming the right of importing to the outports and His Majesty's Ministers, were carried on *viva voce*; but it might be presumed, that some minutes of conversations so important might have been taken.

The honorable gentleman had thought fit to censure the Court for meddling with the topic of the British constitution, in their correspondence with the King's Ministers. This was a strange accusation. Was not every subject of this free country interested in the constitution, and entitled to contend for the care of it in all public measures? Were not the Company, and the whole nation, deeply concerned in maintaining,



the Constitution in its vigour and purity? And the Directors, as acting for the Company, and as free men, having a stake in the country, were fully warranted to express their solicitude on the subject, when it was so evidently and greatly concerned.

Mr. Grant added, that before he sat down, he wished to say a word on the present state of the negociation. His Majesty's Ministers had declared a wish to discuss, in the most full, free, and candid manner, all depending points. The Court of Directors had, on their part, amply stated their reasons for every position they advanced; but he must take leave to say, the Board of Commissioners had not answered those arguments—instead of returning arguments, they had given only decisions. But if any one thing was now essential, it was a clear and thorough understanding between the parties:—this was proper for the sake of the public, and due to the Proprietors of India stock, whose all was at stake. This was what the Directors all along aimed at; what they still wished, and following up the subject with a spirit of conciliation, it would be no fault of their's, if the desired information were not obtained, and every thing satisfactorily adjusted at last. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Weyland was desirous that the adjournment should be only for a week—The question



turned on this point, whether the regulations proposed by Government would benefit the population of India and Great Britain?—The greater delay in their exertions, he considered the greater danger would accrue. In political controversy, prudence should sometimes take the precedence of generosity. On this principle, therefore, he should wish the last letter of Lord Buckinghamshire to be the last ministerial document on their table, as it was certainly the weakest—it was not the letter of a statesman—it was, when analyzed, absolute nonsense. He wished an adjournment for one week, and confidently trusted that they would zealously exert themselves, individually and collectively, to frustrate all invasion upon their chartered rights.

After various observations as to fixing the day of adjournment,

The *Chairman* stated, that although the Directors were desirous of meeting the wishes of the Proprietors in every respect, he considered, that as various meetings of ship owners, ship builders, merchants, and others deeply concerned in the present question, were to be held in the course of next week, the original day for adjournment would be the most convenient and advisable.—He informed the Proprietors, that Ministers had been applied to, for the reasons which had induced them to depart from those



rooted plans they had formerly adopted themselves. That great statesman, the late Lord Melville, was decidedly of opinion, that every article of India trade should be lodged in the warehouses of the Company, and sold in that room. (No. XII, Appendix.)—On this point he had the entire and unequivocal concurrence of his illustrious colleague, Mr. Pitt. That their goods should be brought into the port of London, was a fundamental article in the political and commercial creed of the East-India Company. (*Hear! hear! hear!*)—It seems strange, indeed, for any man to say that he is not concerned in supporting his own rights—what can be meant by Ministers having given the Directors a *proper rub*? What! is not an Englishman to maintain his own rights? Is he not to speak his opinion honestly and frankly in his own cause? This is the birthright of an Englishman, and God forbid it should ever be wrested from him—it was a right he would give up to no Ministers. The Court of Directors had asked them, the reasons of changing their former sentiments and resolutions? they (the Proprietors) perhaps might be persuaded or convinced by them. It should be distinctly understood, that the Directors are not desirous of restraining the exports to the port of London, but of confining the imports to it, as a measure of vital consequence to the very existence,



of the Company. The profits upon the trade certainly had been lessened, but this was owing to captures and shipwreck:—but, will the out-ports be more (exempt from such disasters than the Company? The profits must naturally fluctuate upon all commercial undertakings. (The Chairman here alluded to an opinion given by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons on a former occasion, No. XIII. Appendix.) The Court of Directors were not anxious for a vote of thanks, but to deserve one. He had the highest opinion of His Majesty's Ministers as individuals; but this should not induce him to sacrifice to them one iota of his duty or of the Company's rights.

*Mr. Alderman Atkins* could wish to hear how the honorable gentleman (Mr. Hume) would answer the arguments of the Chairman; he was convinced that they were not to be answered. If the question was that of opposing the interests of the Company to those of the Country, there was not a single Proprietor that would hesitate between the duty and the sacrifice—there was no such collision of interests—the question was, whether the interests of the Company should be sacrificed, not to those of the Country but to popular mistake, to the delusion of experiment, to the cravings of speculation. One establishment for the protection of the trade and shipping alone for the port of London, had cost ha —



million of money; millions had been expended upon others—more than 30,000 persons were employed in these establishments—if the exclusive trade is done away, these must all be driven from their wonted habits of industry, to seek, as they best could, a precarious subsistence—"You take away their life if you do take away the means whereby they live." It cannot be forgotten too, that the Company had furnished Government with 20,000 tons of shipping, amounting to fourteen sail, to whose assistance in a great measure the splendid victory over the Dutch at Camperdown may be attributed.—Could Government look to divided interests, scattered property, and unequal shipping, for so desirable an aid in future emergencies? It was much to be lamented that any shade of difference should exist on the question of adjournment, and on that account he could wish it were separated from the motion of thanks.

*Mr. Hume* (in explanation) considered his opinion had been so guardedly expressed, as not to be thought imputing blame to the Directors. If any loss should be sustained by the measures of Government, they are bound to give ample remuneration.

After a few words the motion of Thanks was united to that of Adjournment, *with one dissentient voice, that of Mr. Hume.*



# APPENDIX.

---

## No. I.

*At a Secret Committee of Correspondence, the 21th November, 1812.*

The Chairman reported to the Committee, that he and the Deputy Chairman had this morning a conference with the President of the Board of Commissioners, on the subject of the Renewal of the Company's Charter, at which his Lordship declared it to be the intention of His Majesty's Ministers, not to abandon the proposition they had made, for allowing a direct trade between India and the outports of the United Kingdom; but that the proposition might be modified, by confining the ports to which ships shall be allowed to import goods from India, to a number less than that to which the Warehousing Act now extends. Lord Buckinghamshire, however, was desirous, before resuming the correspondence relating to it, that the Committee of Correspondence should hold a conference with Lord Liverpool and himself upon the subject.

The Chairman further stated, that, in reply to Lord Buckinghamshire, the Deputy Chairman and himself declined making any observation at present, but stated their intention to communicate the substance of his Lordship's remarks to the Committee of Correspondence, and also expressed their wish, that the Committee might have the honour of waiting upon his Lordship, previously to the proposed conference with Lord Liverpool, to which Lord Buckinghamshire consented.

The Committee, in consequence, resolved to assemble at eleven o'clock on Tuesday next, for the purpose of deliberating upon the subject of the above communication, previously to waiting upon Lord Buckinghamshire, at the hour of two on that day.



## No. II.

*Letter from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to  
the Right Honorable the Earl of Buckinghamshire.*

*East-India House, 28th November, 1812.*

MY LORD,

We have the honor to acquaint your Lordship, that we have communicated to a Secret Committee of Correspondence the substance of the conversation which we had yesterday the honour of holding with your Lordship, Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Sullivan, and in which it was notified to us, that the opinion of His Majesty's Government remains unaltered, regarding the expediency of not confining the import trade from the East-Indies to the port of London.

The Committee received this communication with the deepest concern and regret, its Members unanimously concurring with us in opinion, that should the proposed extension of the trade, even to a small number of the outports of the kingdom, be sanctioned by the Legislature, the measure will be highly prejudicial to the public revenue, injurious to the East-India Company, and detrimental to the prosperity of the merchants, manufacturers, traders, and other numerous bodies interested in the commerce with India, as now carried on through the channel of the river Thames. The Committee being still desirous of an opportunity of renewing their representations to your Lordship upon this important question, before any communication is made to the Court on the subject, have directed us to request the honor of a conference with your Lordship for that purpose. Should it be perfectly convenient to your Lordship to receive the Deputation on Tuesday next, at two o'clock, we shall be able to lay the result of the conference before the Court on the following day.

We have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servants,

(Signed)

HUGH INGLIS,

ROBERT THORNTON.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Buckinghamshire,

&c. &c. &c.



## No. III.

*Letter from the Right Honorable the Earl of Buckinghamshire to the Chairman.*

SIR, *India Board, 28th November, 1812.*

I had the honor of receiving your letter of this day, proposing that the Secret Committee of Correspondence should wait upon me at this Board on Tuesday next.

I shall be happy to have the honor of seeing them; but as I am desirous that Lord Liverpool, and other Members of the Board, should be present at the interview, and as I find that twelve o'clock will be more convenient to them than two, you will, I hope, have no objection to make the appointment for the former hour.

I have the honor to be

Your most obedient and faithful humble servant,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Sir Hugh Inglis, Bart.  
&c. &c. &c.

## No. IV.

*At a Secret Court of Directors, held on Wednesday, the 2d December 1812.*

The Chairman acquainted the Court, that a meeting took place yesterday, at the Board, between several of His Majesty's Ministers and the Committee of Correspondence, upon the subject of the renewal of the Company's exclusive privileges, when it was agreed, that no minutes should be then taken, in order to afford the most unreserved mode of carrying on the discussion; at the conclusion of which it was understood, that His Majesty's Ministers would communicate, in writing, their sentiments upon the whole of the subject.



## No. V.

*At a Secret Court of Directors, held on Tuesday, the  
15th December 1812.*

Minutes of the 2d instant were read and approved.

The Chairman stated, that two conferences between His Majesty's Ministers and the Committee of Correspondence had taken place since the 2d instant, viz. on the 5th and 12th instant, but that he had nothing further to communicate to the Court in consequence.

## No. VI.

*At a Secret Court of Directors, held on Wednesday,  
the 16th December 1812.*

The Court advertng to the statement which the Chairman had, with their approbation, made to the General Court to-day, as to the late conferences with His Majesty's Ministers, upon the subject of renewing the Company's exclusive privileges, and this Court deeming it a proper mark of respect to His Majesty's Ministers, that they should be apprized of the same as early as possible;

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman were requested to wait on the President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India to-morrow, to communicate to his Lordship what had passed in the General Court this day, and to state to his Lordship, that the Court of Directors continue decidedly to entertain the opinion which they have formerly expressed to His Majesty's Ministers, as to the ruinous consequences of admitting the imports from India to the outports of this kingdom.

## No. VII.

*At a Secret Court of Directors, held on Friday, the  
18th December 1812.*

The Court having resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole Court,



And being resumed, the following report from the Committee of the Whole Court was read :

“ The Committee taking into consideration the present state of the negotiation with His Majesty’s Ministers for the renewal of the Company’s exclusive privileges, deem it to be highly important, that the sentiments of the Court of Directors, upon the proposition brought forward for admitting the imports from India to the outports of this kingdom, should be unequivocally known.”

“ The Committee therefore recommend to the Court to pass a resolution, stating that the proposition in question is, for various reasons already set forth in the Court’s writings, pregnant with ruin to the affairs of the Company, inasmuch as it would render them incapable of performing the functions allotted to them, as well in their commercial as in their political capacity, and that the Court cannot therefore, consistently with their duty to their Constituents, recommend to them the adoption of such a proposition.”

And it was, on the question,

*Resolved Unanimously*, That this Court approve the said report.

And the Chairman and Deputy Chairman were requested to wait on the Right Honorable the President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, and to communicate to His Lordship the above proceedings of this day.

### No. VIII.

*At a Secret Court of Directors, held on Tuesday, the 22d December 1812.*

The Chairman acquainted the Court, that in obedience to their resolution of the 18th instant, the Deputy and himself, on Saturday last, waited on the Right Honorable the President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, with a copy of the minutes of the Secret Court of the 18th instant.



## No. IX.

*Letter from the Right Honorable the Earl of Buckinghamshire to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East-India Company.*

GENTLEMEN, *India Board, 24th Dec. 1812.*

The conferences held at this Board with the Committee of Correspondence, having had for their object the most unreserved and candid discussions upon points of the greatest importance, with respect to the renewal of the East-India Company's Charter, and it having been understood that no further steps should be taken upon the subject, until a communication was made by me, in an official shape, to the Court of Directors, it was not without some surprize that the copy of their resolution of the 18th instant was received by His Majesty's Government, because that resolution, adopted under such circumstances, appear to them to have for its object an abrupt termination to all discussion.

They cannot, however, consider it the less incumbent upon them, through you, as the proper official channel, to bring before the Court of Directors the principle upon which the opinions I have to apprise you of have been formed, in order to present to the Proprietors and the Public a correct view of a subject to which so much importance is attached.

I shall, therefore, convey to you the sentiments of His Majesty's Government, precisely in the terms I should have done, if no intimation had been made of the resolution of the Court of Directors of the 18th instant; and with that object I proceed to inform you, that with regard to those points, to which the attention of the Committee of Correspondence has been chiefly directed at the conferences held at this Board, the principle uniformly maintained, as the basis of any arrangement for the renewal of the East-India Company's Charter, *viz.* that the merchants of this country have as substantial claim to as much liberty of trade as they can enjoy, without injury to other important national interests, cannot be departed from.



It was in the hope that the opening of the export trade with India to the merchants of the city of London and of the outports, whilst the import was confined to the port of London, might not be found inconsistent with this principle, that a disposition was felt by the Government to propose an arrangement to that effect.

In consequence, however, of the promulgation of such an intention, several persons, interested in the commerce of the outports, represented in the strongest terms, that the proposed limitation of the import trade from India, rendered the extension of no value to them; and they declared themselves prepared to maintain, that this limitation was not called for by any adequate motive of public interest.

They urged their claim to an equal participation in the general trade to India, and their conviction, that the ground upon which the exclusion in favour of the port of London was defended, viz. the additional danger of smuggling, could not be supported, and they were satisfied that the alleged danger might be obviated by revenue regulations. They also entered largely into the subject of the China trade, contending strenuously against the renewal of the Company's exclusive Charter; and stated their reasons for believing, that measures might be adopted by which that trade could be opened, without injury to the revenue, and without hazarding the continuance of the intercourse with the Emperor of China's dominions.

The importance attached to these representations, induced His Majesty's Government to revise the arrangement which had been in contemplation; and although they did not see cause, under all the circumstances bearing upon this question, to alter the opinion they had entertained, of the propriety of continuing the existing restrictions upon the commercial intercourse with China, and of preserving to the Company the monopoly of the tea trade, they nevertheless felt, that the merchants belonging to the outports had established a claim against an absolute restriction of the import trade to the port of London.



Under this impression, I addressed my letter to you on the 27th of April ultimo.

The observations made by the Committee of Correspondence, in their reply of the 29th of the same month, did not fail to engage the serious attention of His Majesty's Government, but after the best examination of those observations, aided by all the information they have obtained from the Boards of Customs and Excise, they are not enabled to concur in the opinion, that the proposed extension of the import trade from India would be productive of any great increase of smuggling, and certainly not to the extent stated by the Court of Directors.

It is conceived, that the apprehensions entertained on this account might be obviated by various regulations, such as confining the trade to those ports which are, or may be so circumstanced, as to afford security to the due collection of the revenue ; by the limitation of it to vessels of four hundred tons burthen ; by attaching the forfeiture of the ship and cargo to the discovery of any illicit articles on board ; by an extension of the manifest act ; by regulations for checking the practice of smuggling in the ships of the Company ; as well as by other provisions, too minute to be entered into at present, but which will, of course, be attended to, in discussing the details of the subject.

I am persuaded it will not escape your observation, that from obvious considerations, the English Channel must, at all times, especially in time of peace, afford facilities and inducements for smuggling, which do not occur elsewhere to the same extent, on account of the clandestine traffic already established, and the ready communication with the opposite shore.

But, with respect to the whole of this part of the question, it is impossible to lose sight of the deep interest which the Government must feel in the prevention of smuggling. The interests of the Company are, no doubt, involved in it ; but those of the Government are still more concerned : and it cannot be supposed that they would bring forward any proposition which appeared to them likely to endanger a revenue



of from three to four millions ; or that, if a defalcation should unexpectedly arise, they would not immediately take measures for applying a remedy. The Company have, therefore, an ample ground of confidence, not only in the disposition of Government, but in their effectual co-operation on those points, on which the Court of Directors appear to feel the greatest anxiety, and on which they urged their strongest objections to the proposed arrangement.

The several articles which may be imported from the countries within the limits of the Company's Charter, and which are charged with an *ad valorem* duty, although, with the exception of Tea, they bear a very small proportion to the whole of the revenue collected from the trade from India and China, are nevertheless of sufficient importance to demand the attention of Government, as the question may affect the interests of the East-India Company, as well as those of the public revenue.

With this view, it will be necessary to consider whether, with respect to some of them, a rated duty might not be substituted, and whether regulations may not be made for the security of the duty *ad valorem* on those articles which shall continue to be so charged, and which, at the same time, shall prevent their being purchased at a price, likely to operate injuriously to the manufacturers of this country.

The justice of the observations, respecting the additional number of Europeans that would find their way to India in consequence of the extension of the trade, must be admitted to a certain extent ; but it is obvious, that this danger would arise from the extension of the export trade to India ; and would scarcely be lessened by confining the import trade to the Port of London. Every individual, during his residence in India, would of course be subject to the existing regulations of the local Governments :

The situation of Lascars, who are occasionally employed in the navigation of ships from India to this country, would demand the humane interposition of the Legislature ; and there can be no doubt that effec-



tual provision for their maintenance while in England, and for their return to India, will be made.

Having gone through the principal points to which our recent conferences have related, it may be proper for me to apprise you, that His Majesty's Government are of opinion, that the establishment of King's troops, which may be requisite for the preservation of the peace and security of the British possessions in India, must depend upon circumstances that it would be difficult to anticipate; but as the financial situation of the Company may render it necessary that the numbers to be maintained at their charge should be limited, there can be no objection to propose to Parliament, to specify that number by legislative enactment.

I have thus endeavoured to bring the sentiments of His Majesty's Government before you, with the same candor that has been evinced in our recent discussions; and I can venture confidently to assure you, that my colleagues, as well as myself, are most anxious to promote such an adjustment between the Public and the Court of Proprietors, as may be satisfactory to all parties.

The expediency of adhering to that system, by which the Government of India has been administered through the intervention of the Company, is strongly felt by His Majesty's Government; but it must not be supposed, that there are no limits to that expediency, or that there are no advantages which might result from a different course.

It is for the Court of Proprietors to decide, whether their own interests, as well as those of the numerous persons depending upon them, both at home and abroad, can best be preserved by their rejection of, or acquiescence in, those conditions, upon which alone, consistent with their public duty, His Majesty's Government can submit a proposition to Parliament for the renewal of the Charter.

You, Gentlemen, must be aware, that from its approaching expiration, provision must be made, without delay, for the future government of India; and that His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, in his speech



at the opening of the present session, has called upon Parliament to make such provision.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient and faithful humble servant,

(Signed) BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman  
of the Court of Directors.

### No. X.

*Letter from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman  
to the Right Honourable the Earl of Buckingham-  
shire.*

*East-India House, 30th December 1812.*

MY LORD,

WE were honoured, on the 25th instant, with the letter which your Lordship was pleased to address to us on the preceding day, and have laid it before the Court of Directors. We are instructed by the Court to acquaint your Lordship that a General Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock has been summoned, for the special purpose of taking into consideration the important subjects treated of in your Lordship's letter, and we shall lose no time in submitting to your Lordship the result of the deliberations at that meeting.

In reference to the first paragraph of your Lordship's letter, in which the resolution passed by the Court, on the 18th instant, is stated to have caused some surprise to His Majesty's Government, as appearing to have for its object an abrupt termination to all discussion, we are desired by the Court of Directors respectfully to offer the following explanation.

Your Lordship is aware, that at the commencement of the recent conferences on the subject of the Renewal of the Company's Charter, it was agreed between your Lordship and the Deputation from the Court, that no minutes should be taken of what passed in conversation.



Accordingly, no particular communication was made, prior to the receipt of your Lordship's letter of the 24th instant, of the result of these conferences: but an earnest desire having been expressed by those Gentlemen in the Direction who are not Members of the Committee of Correspondence, to be informed, whether the differences of opinion, formerly known to exist, on some important points, between His Majesty's Government and the Court, were in a train of reconciliation, and the general answer which we thought ourselves bound in duty to give, not having tended to afford them the satisfaction they expected, they deemed it proper that the sense of the Court, respecting the question of the outports, should be formally notified to your Lordship, and in consequence the unanimous resolution of the 18th was transmitted. Had the Court perceived that that proceeding admitted of the interpretation which has been put upon it by His Majesty's Government, they would assuredly have taken pains more effectually to guard against so great a misconception of the real intention, which was no other than to mark their adherence to the opinions they have uniformly entertained on the disputed question, of extending the import trade from India to the outports of this kingdom, which had formed the principal subject of discussion between the Members of His Majesty's Government and the Committee of Correspondence. It was certainly desirable for the Members of that deputed Committee, and it was thought that it might not be unacceptable to your Lordship, to know that the sentiments which they had expressed in the course of discussion, were sanctioned by the unanimous concurrence of the Body by whom they were delegated. The mode in which the resolution was adopted was conformable to the usage of the Court of Directors on solemn occasions, namely, after a report from a Committee of the whole Court, which always requires signatures, and which, in the present instance, was subscribed by every Director.

We trust, my Lord, that this explanation of the measure alluded to, will prove satisfactory to your Lordship and the other members of His Majesty's Gov.



vernment; and while we return our sincere acknowledgements for the attention with which our representations have been listened to, in the various interviews with which we have been honored by your Lordship and His Majesty's Ministers who attended, we hope, at the same time, to stand perfectly acquitted of any design, either to prevent or embarrass a full and deliberate discussion of the great interests at stake.

It is a matter of deep concern to us to find, that His Majesty's Ministers seem still to adhere to the principle of opening the outports of the United Kingdom to the importation of commodities from India. We have already, in our letters of the 15th and 29th April last, fully stated the danger that must result to the Company, from so great an enlargement of the privilege in Eastern commerce to our merchants.\* We presume to think our objections to that enlargement have not been adequately answered; and we have to express the concern felt by the Court, that no communication has yet been made to them, of those representations which first led His Majesty's Ministers to entertain, and which induce them still to adhere to the opinion, that the public interest will be best consulted, by not confining the import trade from the East-Indies to the port of London. It would occasion much satisfaction to the Court, should such a communication have the effect of obviating their objections, even in part, to a measure, which the most imperative considerations alone could have influenced them to oppose: and were it unfortunately to fail in producing this effect, it is nevertheless desirable, that the Court of Directors shall have an opportunity of reviewing the question with all the intelligence that can be brought to bear upon it. Your Lordship has, indeed, been pleased to favor us with a brief summary of some of the arguments used by the merchants on this subject,—arguments, we must own, not in the least convincing to us: and we assure ourselves, that in advertising to them, your Lordship does not mean that the Company should be concluded, or their fate determined, by what those who oppose their interests choose



to advance; although their representations appear to have so far influenced His Majesty's Ministers, as to lead them to think, that the merchants "have a claim" to as much liberty of trade as they can enjoy, without injury to other important national interests." In those interests, we may presume, are comprehended both the consideration of the public revenue, and the maintenance of the East-India Company. But what that extent of trade is, "which can be granted with safety to those interests," is still a question undetermined. We confess that the regulations contemplated by His Majesty's Ministers, so far as your Lordship has been pleased to explain them to us, appear by no means calculated to remove our fears. The comparative interest which the Public and the Company have in preventing the smuggling, was described in our letter of the 29th April; and although it be true, as your Lordship observes, that the stake of the Public in this concern is numerically greater than that of the Company, yet the importance of the Company's inferior stake is, to them, infinitely greater, than would be to the Public the importance of the loss the revenue might sustain; because, as matters now stand, the Company have no certain dependance but the China trade, for resources essential to their subsistence. We do not the least question, that His Majesty's Ministers would be thoroughly disposed to frame additional regulations to prevent smuggling Tea, should those now in contemplation be tried, and be found insufficient. But besides that we extremely distrust the practicability of preventing smuggling to a large extent, where the temptations would be so great, we must entreat your Lordship and His Majesty's Ministers seriously to consider, what would be the situation of the Company, if they obtained a charter upon no better terms than those now proposed, and upon trial it should be found that their commercial income failed, and that their dividend should be unprovided for or lowered:—their stock would immediately fall; their credit would be diminished; the currency of their affairs, in their payments particularly, would be impeded; general alarm and dissatisfac-



tion in all parties connected with this great establishment would be felt : and there would be a necessity for going to Parliament again, when evils great, perhaps irretrievable, would have been experienced. It is the duty of the Executive Body of the Company to carry their views forward to such contingencies, and to seek provision against them : and we must beg leave to add, that whatever rights the merchants may claim, or the nation be pleased to bestow on them, it cannot be equitable to make concessions to them which should destroy the Company, who acquired the Indian empire, and who are as much the owners of the chief seats of European trade in that empire, as they are of their freeholds in London.

With respect to the resort of Europeans to India, if we do not misunderstand the scope of your Lordship's observation, it seems to imply, that their numbers might be in proportion to the export trade from this country. If, indeed, they were to be regulated by this scale, our apprehensions would be the less ; but we have no difficulty in acknowledging, that in addition to all our other arguments, against admitting importations to the outports, we think that the granting of this privilege would increase the spirit of rash speculation from Great Britain and Ireland, and thereby the number of adventurers in search of fortune in India ; for it is to be remembered, that those adventurers would naturally seek for new establishments, even out of the Company's territories, and there endeavour to acquire real property.

But, my Lord, this is only one of many points which require particular regulations ; and, at the stage at which we are now arrived in the negotiation, we cannot but state to your Lordship, the anxious wish of the Court to be made acquainted with the whole plan which His Majesty's Government may have it in contemplation to recommend to Parliament for a Renewal of the East-India Company's Charter : including such amendments in the system of the Company's territorial government and administration, as past experience



may have indicated ; the regulations deemed necessary for promoting the discipline and efficiency of the Indian Army ; the amount of force which His Majesty may be empowered to maintain in India at the expense of the Company ; and the provisions that may be thought requisite for settling the relative powers of the Board of Commissioners and the Court of Directors. Though these topics were specifically mentioned in the letters from Lord Melville to the Chairs, of the 30th September 1803 and the 21st March 1812, the Court are still, in great measure, uninformed of the arrangements, in regard to them, which His Majesty's Government may have in view to propose. And we entreat, also, that your Lordship will enable us to lay before the Court of Directors, and ultimately the Proprietors, in any shape that you may judge fit, the information, additional to that of the merchants already solicited, on which the determination of His Majesty's Ministers rests, as to the extension of the trade to the outports, and their intentions upon the other parts of the arrangement to which we have now adverted.

The requests we now make appear to us the more reasonable, from the weighty intimation conveyed in the concluding part of your Lordship's letter. It brings into view (to repeat an expression used in our letter of the 15th April), "*questions of the last importance to the safety of the British Empire in India, and of the British Constitution at Home.*" This is a solemn subject for the Country, as well as the Company. It, indeed, it should ever come under actual discussion, we have that confidence in the equity and wisdom of the Nation, that notwithstanding all present clamours, they will wish to do the Company justice, and to guard all the other great interests which must come into question. But prepared as we shall be, if forced into this situation, to maintain the rights and claims of our Constituents, we must yet express our hope, that the Company will not be reduced to the hard alternative, of thus having to contend for all that is dear to them, or to accept a Charter on terms



which will not enable them to execute the part hitherto assigned to them in the Indian system.

We have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servants,

(Signed) HUGH INGLIS,  
ROBERT THORNTON.

The Right Honorable the Earl of  
Buckinghamshire, &c. &c. &c.

---

No. XI.

*Letter from the Right Honorable the Earl of Buckinghamshire to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, noticed in the preceding Minute.*

*India Board, 4th January, 1814.*

GENTLEMEN,

I had the honor to receive your Letter of the 30th ultimo, and proceed to convey to you the sentiments of His Majesty's Government, as far as it would seem advisable, under present circumstances, to continue the discussion.

With respect to your observation, that the representations which induced His Majesty's Government to form their opinions upon the subject of the extension of the Import Trade, have been withheld from the Court of Directors, and that your objections to that extension have not been "adequately answered," you must allow me to avail myself of this occasion to apprise you, that although His Majesty's Government have shewn a strong disposition to enter into the most frank and unreserved explanations with the Court of Directors, they have not felt that it was within the range of their duty to engage in a controversy upon the points at issue. That duty has been sufficiently discharged, in stating, for the information of the Court of Proprietors, the conditions upon which they were prepared to



submit a proposition to Parliament for the renewal of the Charter, accompanied by such reasons as are conveyed in the communications they have authorized me to make.

I can, however, have no difficulty in acquainting you, that the claims of the Merchants connected with the outports have not been brought before Government by written documents; that they have been urged and discussed at personal conferences with individuals, interested in their success; and that you have already been informed of the grounds upon which they were supported; but that it does not appear to His Majesty's Government, that you can be warranted in expecting that they should give a more particular account of the arguments adduced at those conferences.

I may add, however, that as the merchants and manufacturers connected with the outports, considering themselves entitled, at the expiration of the Charter of the East-India Company, to carry on that trade, from which they had been excluded for a limited time, had entered into a statement of their case, by petitions presented to Parliament in the course of the last session, you may obtain from those records that further information which you appear desirous to possess.

With regard to those points to which you have alluded, as requiring particular regulation, the Ministers of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent having signified to you, that consistently with their sense of public duty, they can submit no arrangement to Parliament, that does not include an extension of the import trade, and the Court of Directors having, with a knowledge of their opinions upon that point, by their resolution of the 18th ultimo, declined to recommend to the Court of Proprietors to agree to such an extension, it would seem premature to enter into details, until that question shall have been finally determined.

You are apprised of the disposition of His Majesty's Government to adhere to the present system of administration in India, and I am not aware that, if circumstances should admit of its continuance, it



would be necessary to propose any material alteration in the existing provisions for carrying it into execution, except such as may arise from the opening of the trade.

The confidence you express in the wisdom and justice of Parliament will, I am persuaded, not be disappointed; nor is it to be supposed, that in the consideration of this great question (to use your own words) "the safety of the British Empire in India" and the British Constitution at Home" will be overlooked, either by the Legislature or the Ministers of the Crown.

If the Government of India cannot be carried on with safety to the Constitution, except through the intervention of the Company, the propositions of the Court of Directors, whatever they may be, must unconditionally be admitted.

It will be for Parliament to determine, whether the Nation is, in this respect, without an alternative; or whether, if a change of system should be rendered necessary by the decision of the East-India Company, measures might not be taken for opening the trade, and at the same time providing such an administration of the Government of India, as might be found compatible with the interests and security of the British Constitution.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient and faithful humble Servant,

(Signed) BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman  
of the East-India Company.

---

No. XII.

*Extract of a Letter from Lord Melville to the Chairman, dated 2d April, 1800.*

In the first place, I set out with disclaiming being a party to those opinions, which rest upon any



*general attack of the monopoly of the East-India Company*, either as to the government or commerce of India. My sentiments, in that respect, remain exactly the same as they were when I moved the renewal of the Charter, in 1798 ; and, if any thing, I am still more confirmed in the principles I brought forward at that time. That a direct interference by Government in the affairs of India is necessary for their stability and uniformity, I am more and more convinced, but that the ostensible form of government, with all its consequent extent and detail of patronage, must remain as it now is, I am persuaded will never be called in question by any, but those who may be disposed to sacrifice the freedom and security of our Constitution, to their own personal aggrandizement and ill-directed ambition; I remain equally satisfied, as to the propriety of *continuing a monopoly of the trade in the hands of the East-India Company*. Those who maintain the reverse, appear to me to be misled by general theories, without attending to the peculiar circumstances of the trade they are treating of. Viewing it, EVEN as a mere COMMERCIAL question, I believe this proposition to be a sound one ; and if the trade were laid open, the supposed advantages thence arising are, AT BEST, very problematical, and would certainly be very precarious and short-lived. It is, however, totally to forget the question, to treat it as a mere commercial one. The same principles which prove the necessity of the present form and mode of Indian government, evince the necessity of the monopoly of trade. The Government and the trade are interwoven together, and we have only to recur to a very recent experience, to learn the immense advantages which have flowed from that connection of Government and trade. By the commercial capital of the Company at home, acting in connection with the public revenues under their administration abroad, they have mutually aided and administered to the wants of each other, and the result has been, the fortunate achievement of those brilliant events, upon the success of which depended the existence of the Government, the territorial wealth, and the trade of India.



*Extract of a Letter from Lord Melville to the Chairman, dated 21st March 1801.*

I am prepared explicitly to declare, that although the first formation of an East-India Company proceeded upon purely commercial considerations, the magnitude and importance to which the East-India Company has progressively advanced, is now so interwoven with the political interests of the Empire, as to create upon my mind a firm conviction, that the maintenance of the monopoly of the East-India Company is **EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO THE POLITICAL INTERESTS** of the State, than it is to the **COMMERCIAL INTERESTS** of the Company.

No. XIII.

*Lord Castlereagh's Opinion expressed in the Debate in the House of Commons on the East-India Budget, 18th July 1806.*

It seemed, however, unjust to describe the Company's commerce as carried on at a loss. To what precise extent it might be profitable, after providing a liberal dividend to the proprietors, might be a matter of more difficult calculation, and must, like all commercial results, be in its nature fluctuating; but, in reasoning upon this branch of the Company's affairs, the worthy alderman (Mr. Prinsep) must establish several preliminary facts, before he can expect to persuade Parliament that the commercial existence of the Company is to be considered merely on grounds of mercantile profit. He must be prepared to shew that individuals would be as likely to carry on steadily the commerce of India, under all the fluctuations to which such a trade is liable, where the outgoings are great, and the returns distant, as a great trading corporation. He must be prepared to dispel the apprehensions which must be entertained with respect to the injurious influence on the prosperity of India, which may be the consequence of an unsteady and unequal demand for their produce, before he can expect



to satisfy Parliament that an intercourse, perfectly unrestrained, is preferable to that qualified intercourse, partly free and partly restricted, which now prevails. If he assumes, that individuals by using an inferior description of tonnage, could carry on the trade at less expense, and consequently at greater profit, he must be prepared to shew, that this is not merely by throwing the difference of the expense on the public, by rendering numerous and expensive convoys requisite to protect their feeble vessels in time of war, whilst the Company's ships, with a comparatively slight aid from our navy, are competent to protect each other, and to set the enemy's ships of war, even when in considerable force, at defiance. He must be prepared to shew, that such an establishment as that of the Company, could be kept up without the protection of a qualified monopoly; or that such a system is in itself unnecessary to the political existence of the Company, and the management of large territorial revenues, when both in peace and in war funds must be transferred through the medium of commerce from India to Europe and from Europe to India. He must also shew, before he can establish that the interest of the manufacturer at home is interested in such a change, that individual speculators would be disposed to send out British manufactures, even at some loss, as the Company have frequently done, or that there is any other limit to the amount of this description of Export, on the part of the Company, than the utmost quantity the Indian market can take off, which they have not hitherto been able, with their most strenuous efforts and some sacrifices, to carry beyond 2,000,000 a year. These, and many other important doubts must be solved, before any satisfactory or sound conclusion can be come to, on the great practical question (Private Trade), to which the worthy alderman, somewhat out of time, had been solicitous to point the attention of the Committee.



## No. XIV.

*A a General Court of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East-Indies, held on Tuesday, the 5th May, 1812.*

*Resolved unanimously,* That this Court has learnt with deep concern and surprize, that His Majesty's Ministers have been induced to change the view they first entertained of the propriety of confining to the Port of London the returns of the trade to India, now to be permitted to all British subjects. That the measure of opening the Outports to vessels of all descriptions from India, comprehending in that term the Eastern Islands, appears to this Court to be fraught with consequences ruinous to the Company, and all the long train of interests connected with it ; by removing from the Port of London the greater part of the Indian trade, which it has hitherto enjoyed ; by rendering useless many of the expensive establishments formed there for the merchandize and shipping of that trade, and throwing out of bread many thousands of persons who now derive constant employment from it ; by deranging the practice and frustrating the end of stated public sales, which are useful and important, both to the Country and the Company, who are necessarily restricted to this practice ; but, above all, by affording facilities for the smuggling of teas into the ports and harbours of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to an extent unlimited, and as this Court apprehend, uncontrollable. That the consequences of this must be, the destruction of the Company's China trade, their best source of commercial profit ; the failure of their dividend ; the depreciation of their stock ; and, unless a fund is provided from some other source for the payment of the dividend, inability on their part to continue to perform the functions assigned to them in the Government of British India. That if the constitution by which the Indian Empire is now administered should thus be subverted, the excellent system of civil and military service formed under the Company, and maintainable only by such a body, will be broken down ;



the tranquillity and happiness of the vast population which that empire contains, the interests of this country in Asia, and its constitution at home, will be imminently endangered.

That the professed object for which the proposed changes are to be made, and such immense sacrifices hazarded, namely, the increase of the commerce of this kingdom, cannot be in any great degree attained, there being no practicability of extending materially the use of our manufactures among the Indian people, the tonnage allotted by the Company, or afforded by Indian ships in the management of individuals, for such exports, not having been fully occupied. Ne ther does it appear practicable largely to augment the importation of profitable commodities from thence; of all which the example of the American trade to the East is a proof, British Manufactures, which they could easily have procured, making no part of it, nor their returns exhibiting any new articles of importance. That therefore the trade now enjoyed by the Company and individuals will be the only certain trade to which new adventurers can have recourse. And this will be no addition to the commerce of the Country, but only a transfer from one set of hands to another; so that, old establishments will be subverted, without substituting any thing equally good in their place; and, to all appearance, with great detriment to the nation, particularly in the defalcation of a large part of the duties now collected on tea, to the amount of four millions sterling per annum; for all which defalcation, whether, one, or two, or three millions, new taxes must be laid on the people.

That the cause of the Company has been deeply injured by prejudice, ignorance, erroneous assumptions, and of late by extensive combinations, and by unfair representation, canvas, and intimidation: in all which the merits and rights of the Company, the political interests of British India, and of this country as connected with them, have been left out of sight, and the single object of the extension of commerce, an object



too only of speculation; in opposition to past experience, is the governing principle.

This Court however confidently hope, that Parliament will not decide the fate of the Company, on the representations and demands of private interests, but on just and comprehensive views of national policy; and the Court must also believe that His Majesty's Ministers are too enlightened and equitable, finally to adopt any measure calculated to destroy the commercial profits of the Company, and thereby to disable them from performing their political functions. This Court therefore entirely approving, both of the firmness which their Directors have shewn in maintaining the interests of the Company, and of the manner in which they have, in the papers now produced by them, defended those interests, doth recommend it to them, to persevere in the negotiation with His Majesty's Ministers upon the same principles; assured of the determination of this Court to support them to the utmost, in maintaining the permanence of the Company and the national interests which are involved in their stability.

*Resolved unanimously,* That the thanks of this Court be given to Randle Jackson, Esq. for his very luminous and excellent speech this day; for the great zeal, ability and industry he has on various occasions, and particularly on this, displayed for the honor and advantage of this Company.

*Resolved unanimously,* That the warmest thanks of this General Court be offered to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Court of Directors of this Company, for their very able conduct in the negotiation with Government for the renewal of the Charter; alike evincing the most luminous ideas of the best interests of this Company, and their most honorable conduct in the management of so important a concern.

The Court then on the question adjourned.

K



---

Printed by Cox and Baylis,  
No. 75, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.

---



## East India Affairs.

---

*Recently published by BLACK, PARRY, and Co.  
Booksellers to the Honorable East India  
Company.*

PAPERS respecting the NEGOCIATION for a Renewal of the East India Company's exclusive Privileges 8vo Price 3s 6d.  
CORRESPONDENCE and PROCEEDINGS in the NEGOCIATION for a Renewal of the East India Company's Charter 8vo. Price 1s. 6d.

REPORT on the NEGOCIATION between the HONORABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY and the PUBLIC, respecting the Renewal of the Company's exclusive Privileges of Trade for Twenty Years, from March 1794. By John Bruce, Esq. M P. FRS Historiographer to the Hon East India Company Printed by authority of the Hon Court of Directors 4to. price 15s. boards.

ANNALS of the HONORABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY, from their Establishment by the Charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1600, to the Union of the London and English East-India Companies, 1707 8. By John Bruce, Esq M P and FRS Keeper of His Majesty's State Papers, and Historiographer to the Honorable East India Company 3 vols 4to £4. 10s.

A few Copies, in Royal 4to. £6 6s.

The FIFTH REPORT from the SELECT COMMITTEE of the HOUSE OF COMMONS on the AFFAIRS of the EAST-INDIA COMPANY, as ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 28th July, 18 2 Containing, —I. **BENGAL PRESIDENCY** — 1 A Summary of the different Systems of Internal Government, antecedent to 1784 2 On the Reforms introduced by Lord Cornwallis, under Orders of the Court o Directors of 12th April 1786 3. On the practical Effects of the New System of Government.—II **PRESIDENCY OF FORT ST. GEORGE** —1 View of the Measures and Systems adopted for the Administration of the Land Revenues, &c. in the Ancient Territories, down to the Period when the Bengal System of Revenue Management was extended to those Territories 2. View of the Progress of Revenue Administration in the Modern Possessions, given under the separate Heads of Havelly Lands, and Poligar or Zemindarry Lands. 8vo. Price 12s. boards.



## BOOKS ON EAST-INDIA AFFAIRS.

**EAST-INDIA STATUTES.**—A Collection of Statutes relating to the East-India Company; with an Appendix, containing Acts, and Parts of Acts, relating to Shipping, Duties, Regulations for Export and Import, &c. &c. which in general do not solely relate to the East-India Company; together with a copious Index of the Whole. For the Use of the East-India Company. 4to. £4. 4s. call, lettered.

**ORIENTAL COMMERCE;** or, A Guide to the Trade of the East-Indies and China. By William Milburn, of the Hon. East-India Company's Service. Two Volumes Royal Quarto, Price £5. 5s. in boards, illustrated with numerous Charts, engraved by Arrowsmith.

**ENGLISH AND HINDOOSTANEE NAVAL DICTIONARY** of Technical Terms and Sea Phrases, as also the various Words of Command given in working a Ship, &c. with many Sentences of great Use at Sea, to which is prefixed a Short Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language: the whole calculated to enable the Officers of the Hon. East-India Company's and Country Service, to give their Orders to the Crews with that Exactness and Promptitude, which, upon every Occasion, must prove of the greatest Importance. By Elizabeth Thomas Roebuck, of the Madras Establishment, Acting Quarter Master and Assistant Secretary in the College of Fort William. 8vo. 7s.

**THE PRELIMINARY DEBATE** at the EAST-INDIA HOUSE, on Tuesday, the 5th January, 1813; on the Negotiation with His Majesty's Ministers relative to a Renewal of the Charter; with an Appendix containing all the Letters and Documents referred to upon the Subject. By an Impartial Reporter. 8s.

**THE EAST-INDIA DIRECTORY** for 1813, Corrected to the 31st December, 1812. Containing complete Lists of the Company's Servants, Civil, Military, and Marine, with their respective Appointments at the different Presidencies in the East-Indies; with Indexes to the same, and Lists of Casualties since the last Publication; Together with Lists of the Europeans, Mariners, &c. not in the Service of the East-India Company; with the Births, Marriages, and Deaths in the several Presidencies in the year 1811. Also Lists of the Merchant Vessels employed in the Country Trade. Compiled from the Official Returns received at the East-India House, by John Mathison and Alexander Way Mason, of the Secretary's Office, East-India House. By Permission of the Hon. East-India Company. Illustrated with a New Coloured Map of Hindoostan, pointing out the Late Division of Territory. Price 8s. sewed.



# DEBATES

HELD ON

*The 19th, 22d, and 26th January, 1813,*

AT THE SEVERAL

ADJOURNED COURTS

OF

***EAST-INDIA PROPRIETORS***

WITH

**AN APPENDIX, &c.**

---

**BY AN IMPARTIAL REPORTER.**

---

....." 'Tis your ALL  
" To keep your Trade entire, entire the Force  
" And Honour of your Fleet."———*Thomson.*

---

LONDON:

Printed for **BLAKE, PARRY, and CO.** Leadenhall Street;

---

1813.



---

Printed by Cox and Baylis, Great Queen Street,  
Lincoln's Inn-Fields.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

*THE Reporter of the Preliminary Debate which was held at a Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock, on the 5th of January, 1813, pledged himself to continue them with accurate fidelity, and he trusts the pledge is now redeemed. Biassed as he confesses himself to have been, by the eloquence, the arguments, the researches, and the local knowledge so luminously displayed, he has still maintained a strict and an unqualified impartiality. He is sorry, from the physical impossibility of following Mr. Hume with sufficient accuracy through his extended and elaborate calculations, that he is compelled to apologise to that gentleman for some, he trusts, immaterial omissions; but he laments this the less, as the honorable gentleman has already advertised his speech, under his own correction,—by which it will be easily estimated how much attention has been paid to the purport, the argument, and even the language of his speech, and that what little omission there may be, could only arise from the rapidity of debate, and the involution of figures.*



## ADVERTISEMENT.

*To the other Gentlemen he offers no apology, much as he conceives to be due to them—he hopes they will accept his endeavours to record the splendour of those talents and the anxiety of that zeal which reflect a mutual honour upon each other—and when they look on the lineaments of their minds, as portrayed by him in this production, and should think the likeness a faint one, they will remember he can only draw the features,—he cannot throw the fire and the spirit of the Speaker upon paper. For he may say with the Abbé Menage, of a beautiful animated lady's picture, that the portrait could not be like, il est insensible.*

*An Appendix is added in consequence of various allusions in the Debate.*

*The Reporter, finding the Speech of Lord Moira to the East-India Directors, at the City of London Tavern, has become a subject of interest, though it does not strictly connect itself with the Debate, has given directions to have it inserted in the Appendix.*

*Those who are not already possessed of the Preliminary Debate may obtain copies from the various booksellers to combine with the present Publication.*

J. R.



# PROCEEDINGS, &c.

~~MINUTES OF THE COURT~~

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19.

THE Minutes of the last Court having been read by the Clerk,

The *Chairman* (Sir *Hugh Inglis*) addressed the Proprietors, informing them,

That this ADJOURNED COURT was held to take into farther consideration the documents which were laid before it on the 5th of this month:—that a more important question was never agitated; important, as it related to the East-India Company, important, to the persons connected with the East-India Company, and of the greatest importance to the nation at large. In the discussion of this question, it required all the wisdom, all the temper, all the moderation, which could be bestowed upon it.—That it was not only the welfare of the Company, not only the welfare of the numerous persons connected with it, which were to be considered; but even the interests of those adventurers themselves, who wish to break in upon the barrier



of a long established trade; so successfully and so honorably carried on by the port of London, both to and from the East-Indies. To such adventurers he could foresee nothing but ruin and disappointment, as the certain, the inevitable result of a compliance with their own wishes; nothing but a sweeping destruction to the East-India Company; which must bear away with its desolating torrent, the commerce and the prosperity of the greatest city in the world. In considering this question in all its points, he urged them to look likewise to the security of the national revenue; for although it might be said, *that* is the more particular duty of Government to watch over, yet if, by removing from the port of London the exclusive trade to India, the revenue of this country should suffer, in the loss of four millions per annum, how is that defalcation to be made up, except by adverting to what is already so oppressive and exhausted, an addition to the burthens already imposed, or some other intolerable and grievous taxation?—He entreated them to take this subject into their serious consideration; and having maturely deliberated upon it, with the most awful and cautious reflections, that they would deliver their judgments distinctly and firmly, deciding and determining their combined opinions in such a manner, as to



instruct the Directors how they were to act at so momentous a crisis.—While he thus urged them to evince determined firmness, he trusted they would shew their moderation, and manifest an anxious wish to meet Government, if it were possible, without sacrificing, what might be considered their dearest rights, and the welfare of the empire.—He concluded with observing, that the gentlemen behind the bar (the Directors) had had no communications whatever with any persons, nor had they seen any thing which could induce them to alter their opinions since the last debate.—(*Hear! hear!*) It had been suggested, that there were points of approximation between the Directors and the Government — “would to God,” said he, “we were likely to approximate: I hope we shall. But nothing has happened, that can enable me to state, there is any probability of such an approximation. I have thought it necessary to declare this openly, because it has been reported, out of doors, that some arrangement had been proposed by his Majesty’s Ministers. Unhappily there is not the least foundation for such an assertion.”

Mr. *Weyland* expressed himself to have been little known to this Court, and that he should not have presumed to step forward at this critical moment, had he not conceived that the great inte-



rests which are implicated in the decision of this question, called on every thinking man, to deliver his opinion; and this consideration he thought would operate, in some degree, as a guarantee for his being attended to, however humble his abilities. Impressed with the magnitude of the subject, he had minutely and deliberately inquired into it; as connected with the questions of policy, humanity, and right; points which must strike every reflecting mind, when the sources by which the establishments of the Company are supported, have been called in question. Though a proprietor of East-India Stock, that consideration was small indeed, when compared with the stake he had in the welfare of the country; and sensible as he was of the very deep interest he had in the general good of the community at large, he trusted that, in taking this view of the subject, he had discarded every feeling of individual benefit, and avoided that bias, of which, not even the best intentioned minds can at all times divest themselves.

He hoped this question would not be treated as a question of party:—he was determined not so to consider it. Indeed, it was of such extent and complexity, that the most honorable minds might differ materially, without the imputation of partiality; and he was sure, the Ministers of this coun-



try, those gentlemen who now exercise the high offices of the state, particularly in that department more immediately connected with the East India affairs, were influenced by the strongest sense of impartiality, and a sincere desire to do their duty fairly and honorably to all parties. Having said this, he could not help thinking it impossible for any person who had deliberately weighed the subject, to avoid seeing, that the question between the petitioners against the Charter and the East-India Company, was supported by statements of so directly opposite a nature, that those who are placed in the situation of umpires were not called on to compromise, but for decision; and though it could not be said that the Rubicon was passed, it could not be denied, that they were on its banks, on the very brink of the stream, and ready to plunge into its waters.

Various Statesmen, Mr. Pitt, Lord Melville, Lord Cornwallis, and others, all of late years, refused to adopt the principles which were now incautiously advanced; and there did not appear, from the documents before the Court, that any imperative circumstances of the present time had occurred, to justify the alteration in the beginning of the present negotiation, the details of which were before them. The first proposition made to the Court was—



[*Here the Hon. Proprietor, in consequence of sudden indisposition, was obliged to sit down.*]

After a pause of a few minutes—

Mr. *Davis* rose and observed, that, knowing the value of time, he should occupy the attention of the Court for as short a period as possible. But it appeared to him there was now so great a national question before them, that it called for the opinion and observation of every member.—The question was, whether the export and import trade of India from the port and city of London should be removed, and given to the outports, or whether we should endeavour to keep them where they now were? In his judgment such a removal would be fraught with the greatest disadvantages to the port of London, while it could not tend to produce any possible benefit to any one of the outports. (*Hear!*)

He should state, as briefly as possible, his reasons for so thinking; and enter into details which, he presumed, could not be overturned. He did not mean to argue from theory:—he had made four voyages to the East Indies; he had acted both as an East-India agent and as a merchant; and the result of his experience was, a firm conviction, that the throwing open the trade by Government would produce incalculable mischief; because, he had reason to know, that the exports already ex-



ceeded the demand. He had no hesitation in saying that, for many years last past, more goods had been sent to India than could have been consumed, except, indeed, by the climate, which had destroyed a considerable proportion of them. With regard to the profits on these goods, he would appeal to any merchant, whether he had discovered it to be a trade worth carrying on by individuals. No man, he believed, who was acquainted with it, could think it worth his while, under existing circumstances—Much had been said abroad, about the high price of the freight of our ships, Formerly, he admitted, it was very high; but, speaking of the present day, the Company had gone into the opposite extreme.

The merchants at the outports seem to be of opinion, that the products of the East-Indies may be brought home in a West-Indiaman, a Streightsman, or any other description of vessel: but this opinion was delusive and erroneous, as experience had already discovered. The shipping of Liverpool and Bristol, though adapted to carry sugar and pepper from the West Indies, were not calculated to convey indigo and silks from the East—nor were they at all fitted to double the Cape of Good Hope. This was plain matter of fact, though few private merchants, at present unconnected with the trade, could be acquainted



with it ; and, he believed, if Ministers did really know the fact, they would see the fallacy of those petitions which had been laid before them. It was certainly their bounden duty to listen to the statements contained in those petitions ; but they ought not to give way to the representations of the ignorant, merely because they are clamorous.

He meant to give no offence by this expression ; but conceived that, on this subject, many of the petitioners must necessarily be ignorant :—they had not had the woeful experience of those who had been connected with the trade. To prove the correctness of his statement, he could produce, for their information, the evidence of facts. Lately, in Bengal, a class of persons, captains and officers of East-Indiamen, who procure their freight free of expense, applied to the Governor-General for a drawback on the duties payable there. “ We have,” said they, “ brought in—” vestments here, by which we are considerable “ losers.” Lord Minto’s answer was,—“ Gentlemen, I am sorry for your losses, but the “ fault is your own ; you have speculated, you “ have been imprudent, and every man ought to “ pay for his imprudence.”—This is a case of the present day ; he would likewise advert to one which occurred at another place, in the year 1795. The *Rodney*, a ship belonging to the



Company, was consigned to Madras and Bengal. The captain took out goods to the amount of £12,000; one third of which was intended for Madras and the remaining two-thirds for Bengal. When, however, the ship arrived at Madras, the Government was under an urgent necessity of sending her back to England; in consequence of which, £8,000 worth of goods were unexpectedly thrown upon the Madras market. The store-keepers would not purchase, neither would the merchants; an attempt was then made to retail the investment, but that did not answer. Lord Hobart, now Lord Buckinghamshire, who was then governor, interested himself for the captain, and made him an offer of remitting his money, through the Company's treasury, on the best terms: but he had no money to remit—he had nothing but goods; and these he could not convert into cash. A lottery was at length set on foot, as the *dernier resort*: He was at Madras at the time, and spoke from memory; but his firm belief was, that the name of Lord Hobart stood at the head of the list of subscribers to that lottery. On account of some doubts which he entertained of his own recollection, he had applied to the captain himself for his statement of the circumstance, and with the permission of the Court would read



his (the captain's) answer: —“ My dear Sir,  
“ I have been endeavouring to recollect the  
“ circumstance of the lottery at Madras; and I  
“ am disposed to believe, that Lord Hobart's  
“ name stood at the head of subscribers.” Such  
was also his own decided belief; and his lord-  
ship could not but remember the circumstance.  
This occurrence tended to shew, that there was  
an ample supply of goods in the market. The  
articles in question were purchased, for ready  
money, from the manufactures at Manchester,  
Birmingham, and Sheffield; the regular allow-  
ance of £25 per cent. was made, and, conse-  
quently, no goods could come more cheaply to  
market. The want of purchasers, however,  
proved, that there had been a considerable influx  
of manufactures to our East-India territories, and  
that there is no want of a greater supply,—this  
was the object he wished to impress on their  
minds

With regard to the import trade, it appeared  
to him to be a very considerable object, that  
the whole should come to one market; it is  
an inducement to foreign purchasers to deal with  
one body, and import at one price; whereas, if  
they purchase cheap at Liverpool and dear at  
Bristol, they will be unable to establish a fair  
market on their return home, which must mate-



rially operate against their trade. He was for a safe, and not a speculative trade; and he thought, as a commercial nation, it should be their endeavour to keep trade on a par; for to have a very extensive demand one year, and a very confined demand the next, must be equally hurtful to the manufacturer and to the merchant, examples of which had recently passed before them. He could not help thinking, that if Ministers did know the real state of the case, they would pause before they listened to the petitions of those who are at present so desirous of injuring themselves. Such were his opinions, and such, he thought, must be the opinions of Ministers, when they had properly investigated the subject. But if, after they have received all the necessary information on the question, they should still persist in granting this ideal boon to the country, he, for one, must exclaim—

“Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.”—

Mr. *Weyland* again rose.—He said, he had drawn up a series of resolutions, which, without farther preface, he would submit to the Court. They contained an abstract of those sentiments, on which it was his intention to have expatiated at length.



The Resolutions were then read by the clerk.\*

Mr. *Weyland*, in continuance, observed, that these were the Resolutions he had framed, and on which he intended to have enlarged. He could only assure them, they contained the sincere sentiments of his mind, after giving the subject the most deliberate attention; and he was glad they had been received with so many marks of approbation by the Court. He should trouble them no farther, and apologized for the attempt he had before made to address them, which, from various causes, principally an ill state of health, and his not being used to public speaking, he was unable to effect. He should, however, take the hint which had been given him, and in future use his pen, rather than his tongue, in support of that just cause, the cause of the Company. (*Applause.*) He then moved the first Resolution, which, being duly seconded, and the question put from the Chair,—

Mr. *Hume*, in rising, on the present occasion, professed himself to be aware, that he ought to make an apology to the Court. While he saw round him so many persons, whose abilities were so much superior to his own, it might seem arrogant in him to come forward and

\* As the Resolutions were afterwards materially compressed, we have given them insertion in their due place, at the conclusion of the Debate.



obtrude his opinions ; but he trusted, when his motives were stated, that they would be approved ; and that every unfavourable impression would be removed from the minds of gentlemen. It was his wish, that on a subject of so much importance, a subject in which thousands were interested, not only in that Court but in the nation at large ; it was his wish, he repeated, and, he hoped, the wish of that assembly, that the discussion should be conducted with all the candour which it demanded. Actuated by this feeling, he obtruded himself on a former occasion ; not that he could throw any additional light on the subject, but because he thought the determination of that day was too hasty and precipitate ; therefore he stepped forward to recommend calm deliberation. Feeble as his abilities were, he feared that he should not be able to produce any considerable effect on the Court : but his end would be answered, if what he said should have the power of calling the attention of others, more capable of delivering their opinions, to this momentous subject. If nothing worthy of approbation should fall from him, still the country must derive much benefit from the discussion of this question.

He was inclined to take a very different view of the subject from that entertained by



the honorable gentleman who preceded him ; he might be right as to insulated facts ; sometimes there may be an overplus, sometimes a deficiency of goods in the market. He had pointed out some instances of the former ; but he had not mentioned any of the latter description ; although it is well known, that £100 and even £150 per cent. has been occasionally made on the invoice accounts : such circumstances sometimes occur, as well as severe losses. These, however, are insulated facts, and therefore, on the general subject, they ought to weigh but little ; their object being to take a great and comprehensive view of the question. On a former occasion, he thought that they were merely to take into consideration, whether the import trade was to be extended to the outports ; but he was corrected by the Honorable Chairman, who informed him, that the entire interests of the Company, with respect to territorial possession, political arrangements and commercial prosperity, were connected with the decision, which would be founded on that discussion.

The field of observation was therefore exceedingly wide ; but he should endeavour to confine himself within as narrow limits as possible. What he should feel it his duty to state was—that where so many interests were to be considered,



it could not be expected his remarks should be extremely short. His intention was to produce nothing but facts, and on them to found whatever he had to offer. On the voluminous resolutions which had just been read he could not form an accurate judgment; for they could not be perfectly understood, unless sufficient time were allowed for their consideration. He made no doubt that the Honorable Gentleman who proposed them, believed them to contain nothing but what was true:—still, however, they were merely opinions; and it was the duty of the Court to decide only on facts; to reason from the various bearings of facts; and, from the past, to argue on the probabilities of the future. There were some very good friends of his, who had kindly observed, that he came forward with what they pleased to call an ungenerous attack on the East-India Company.—(*Hear ! hear !*) So far from this being the case, he was a friend to the Company from a three-fold consideration: he had the greatest respect and veneration for them, as a political body and a government: he had spent a considerable portion of his life, not less than fifteen years, in their service: he had visited every possession they had in India. He had taken a long time to consider every thing connected with their commercial, as well as their civil and



military establishments ; he therefore had not formed an hasty opinion : his sentiments were not the result of the experience of weeks or of months, but the matured judgment of several years deep consideration ; and he frankly declared, that even if Ministers had offered to concede every thing the Company wanted, he himself should have stepped forward, for the purpose of stopping the current of that, which he conceived detrimental to its interests, and those of the public. He was, in the first place, a friend to the Company, from feelings of real veneration for their excellent establishments ; for he had often had occasion to observe the great zeal and ability displayed by the heads of departments, and the extraordinary attention and correctness evinced by those in minor situations. And here he considered it but the meed of justice to the gentlemen composing that Court, to enter his testimony against a delusion which has been spread abroad, that the government of India was neither free, liberal, nor equitable. He had visited all the Company's establishments, and he felt justified in stating, that no government in Europe was so excellently supported ; the rights of the subject were scrupulously watched over ; the utmost protection extended to property ; and all those blessings, which form the principal features and



the most pleasing attractions of civilized life, were unceasingly cherished---(*Applause*). He had seen the establishments of Government in this country, and it was but candid to say, that the Company's establishments, particularly at Bengal, were as much superior, in efficiency and in the execution of all their duties, to those relative departments under the British Crown, either at home or in the colonies, as it is possible for any one Government to be superior to another. (*Great applause.*) Some instances of deficiency may doubtless be produced.—Perfection cannot be expected in mortal works—corruption will creep in : but, wherever any defect was discovered, exertions were instantly made to rectify it ; and every thing which seemed likely to militate against the interest of the natives was studiously avoided. So much he said on a general view ; but were he to go into detail, he could recount at length the various benefits derived from the different establishments.

If he looked to the military department, he was sure he could not be contradicted, when he said that the exploits of the Company's forces had not been excelled by any of the recent achievements of the British troops, great and glorious as they were. (*Applause.*)

In the revenue and commercial department,



a degree of correctness and attention was visible, which merited the highest eulogium, and he spoke in the hearing of many gentlemen who could correct him if he were wrong, that if in the commercial department, there was any room for censure, it did not arise from want of zeal in the individuals connected with it, but from the errors of the system, and the political arrangements which are joined with it. Generally, however, the different establishments were as complete as possible; and therefore it was far from his intention or wish, to overturn that form of Government, which had been so wisely supported in India. We had not there, as in this country, unsettled accounts of twenty or thirty years standing; on the contrary, although the revenue there amounted to £15,000,000, a sum little short of the revenue of England previous to the last war, yet so admirable was the system, that every account was settled, in six months after the period when it was contracted.—(*Applause.*) Let it not therefore be supposed, that he who could so well appreciate the excellence of the Government, could be anxious to ruin a system, which he hoped would not, even in part, be destroyed.

A second motive which bound him to the Company was, that of self-interest. He was a proprietor of East-India stock: not numerically,



it is true, to so great an amount as many gentlemen; but to him, retired from active life, it was, perhaps, of as great consequence as a much larger stake might be to others: surely therefore, he should not be accused of wilfully acting contrary to his own interest. There was a third motive by which he was actuated in coming forward, and which would perhaps weigh, in some degree, with the Court. Insulated from any benefit he might derive through the Company, he had a duty to perform as a citizen of this country; and if he conceived that an amelioration could be effected in any one point material to her interest; if her marine could be rendered more efficient; if her commerce could be improved; if the profits of her merchants could be increased, by pursuing the course he should recommend, these would form powerful motives for intruding his opinions on the Court.

On a subject of so much consequence, it was necessary that some particular order should be observed. With this view, he proposed to divide the remarks he should offer, under *five* heads: 1st, As to the correspondence between Government and the Company, which was then before the Court, he should compare it with that which took place on a former occasion, and examine in what light they ought to view it. 2d, He should



consider what was the situation of the Company's territory and commerce, at the renewal of the Charter in 1793 ; and what expectations were entertained by the Company, and by individuals, in consequence of that arrangement, which he should determine by facts. 3d, He should discuss the subject of an open trade, and whether it was likely to create advantages or disadvantages to the Indian empire, and to the public in general. 4th, He should consider the territorial and commercial rights of the Company ; and 5th, What resources the Company possess—what are advantageous, what injurious ; to shew that we ought to retain what is beneficial, and discard what is otherwise.

As to the first point, he found from the correspondence now before them, that the negotiation for renewing the Charter commenced in 1802. It was unnecessary to state what propositions were then made ; but certainly, in the second letter from the President of the Board of Control, at a subsequent period, two very material alterations were proposed ; namely, the opening of the trade, and the transfer of the military forces of the Company to Government. In their answer of January 9, to this letter, he thought the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman, as far as the question of the open trade was con-



gained, however eloquent their language, fell short of overthrowing the arguments adduced by their opponent; but, on the military part of the question, they were eminently successful. Indeed, if ever a point was supported by powerful reasoning, if ever facts were placed in a strong point of view, if ever argument was pursued to complete demonstration, it was on that occasion. (*Applause.*) These representations were attended to; Ministers changed their opinions—they waved that division of the question, and thus abandoned a measure which would have produced, he should not say absolute ruin, but immense evil to the nation.

Then came the second attempt at a negotiation, in November last, when His Majesty's Ministers stated, that their opinion was altered from what it was before, inasmuch as they now thought it necessary to extend the import as well as the export trade. This appeared to be the only point on which they differed; for it seemed to him, from the letter of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the 2d of April 1812, that the Court of Proprietors had conceded that the Charter should be renewed, on the principle of permitting an export from all ports, and confining the imports to the port of London. This, at least, seemed to have been implied, though no document existed by which it could be positively shewn.



Therefore, the question was, whether the interests of the Company would be so much affected by this proposed alteration in the import system, as to render it necessary to stop all farther negotiation, for the purpose of procuring that, which is the guarantee of their dividends, and the protection of their stock. He did not approve of breaking off all conference. He would have recommended, that His Majesty's Ministers should have been required to state, if mischief resulted from the alteration, how far they were willing to guarantee the ultimate stock of the Company, and the dividends due thereon. But the Court of Directors thought otherwise, and so did Ministers. At issue they were, and in order to settle their differences, private conferences were certainly the best, where, without taking down minutes, all the parties could come forward with candour and frankness. He did not mean to call in question the sincerity of the Court of Directors; he had no doubt but they had the interests of the Company at heart: but still a diversity of opinion might be entertained; and he did think, that as the Court stated, on the 2d of April, that they would come to no decision till the final intentions of Government were known, and on the 2d of December, engaged



cordially to cultivate private conferences, without taking minutes, and answered, when the question was put to them, that they could have nothing to communicate, until His Majesty's Ministers had committed to writing the full extent to which they were willing to go; under these circumstances, it was surprising that the Court of Directors should agree to the resolution of the 18th of January, which, without meaning to offend, he must consider as premature. He looked upon it as a kind of defiance held out to the Government. It was saying to the Ministers, "we are determined on a certain line of conduct, no matter what arguments you may make use of."—What success, he should be glad to know, could be obtained by this proceeding?

His Majesty's Ministers were accused of altering ~~their~~ opinion—but the reason was clear. Did not the Court state on what terms the Charter was to be renewed? Did not the information spread over the country like wild-fire; and were not petitions signed in every quarter, calling on Ministers to avert that, which the petitioners considered highly detrimental to the outports? Thus the Ministers, standing in the situation of umpires, between the merchants of the outports and the Company, were bound to hear the arguments on each side. It was said,



that nothing but opinion was set in opposition to the statements from the Chair. The reality was this—the Directors were afraid that their commerce would suffer, and that the revenue would be injured by smuggling, and this was represented to the President of the Board of Control. What was the answer of the Earl of Buckinghamshire? “We have examined the Commissioners of the Revenue at the outports, who state, that there is no probability of any such loss.” Was it possible to proceed upon better ground than this? Indeed, he had seen two of the Commissioners himself, and by them he had been informed, that there was more smuggling carried on in the River Thames, than in any other part of the kingdom—(*A laugh.*)

This might be matter of opinion, and he only stated it as such; and therefore, considered the conduct of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, as perfectly correct in giving that answer. What, he should be glad to know, was his duty as President of the Board of Control, but to watch over the interests of the country at large, and to attend to the representations of those who requested to be admitted to a participation in the trade. And he was afraid, that the representations of the iron manufacturers of Birmingham and Sheffield, had, on the present occasion, so



swayed the hearts of His Majesty's Ministers, and so *tempered* their minds, that all the gold of the East-Indies would not be able to remove the impression. He had been told, that they had not gone back, without effecting the purpose of their visit to the metropolis. Their arguments, it seems, were too strong to be resisted, and Ministers had been induced to impart to them a portion of the import as well as of the export trade.

Now let it be examined what was the course pursued at the period of the renewal of the last Charter. The negotiation took place, in January 1793, with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. The Directors demanded on what terms they were to receive the Charter, and they closed immediately with the proposition which was made. On the 16th of February, Mr. Dundas's letter on the subject was read to the Court, it was also published, and the business was considered as settled. But what was the ultimate event? Why, the merchants throughout the country claimed a part of the trade; and meetings were held at Glasgow, Birmingham, Sheffield, &c. for the purpose of petitioning. Deputations also met Mr. Dundas, and, on the 24th of February, he went to the Court of Directors;—"we cannot," said he, "agree to give you the Charter on the terms you desire; there must



be such an extension of the trade to, and from India, as will enable the merchants to bring home the greatest quantity of raw materials, for the use of the British empire; as well as to send out as much manufactures as they can possibly dispose of." The Directors, at that time, were as firm as they were now, but they acted very differently. "We cannot," answered they, "decide ourselves; but we will submit the business to the Court of Proprietors." And, had this been done on the present occasion, it would not have been worse for the Company. The Court of Directors did apply to the Proprietors, and the consequence was, that a certain portion of tonnage was allowed to the private merchants. If this course had been adhered to now, he would have been better satisfied, and so, he believed, would the country. He could not see any thing blameable in the line followed on this occasion by His Majesty's Ministers, which was similar to that of 1793; nor could he perceive any thing improper in the language held by them.

If the expressions of the Earl of Buckinghamshire were considered disrespectful, what must be thought of those made use of by Mr. Dundas, in the former negotiation? He had heard an attack on the last meeting, on the



conduct of the noble Earl, and as the opinion of one might sometimes be looked upon as the opinion of many, he had thought it right that his sentiments should not be mistaken. The Earl of Buckinghamshire was accused of using harsh language: but those who examined the correspondence must at once see that the assertion was not warranted. If the language of Lord Buckinghamshire was viewed in so very offensive a light, how was that of Mr. Dundas, in his letter of March 24, 1793, to be considered? In that letter he thus expresses himself.—  
 “ I am not anxious what your opinions may be. The proposals I transmit are such as I shall feel justified in recommending to Parliament; you may accede to them, if you please; if you do not, I cannot recommend to Parliament the renewal of your Charter; and I am ready to meet you in the House of Commons, on this, or any other basis.”

This might be considered decisive; but certainly the language of Lord Buckinghamshire was more mild; and, therefore, he thought it necessary to say, that the Court ought not to concur in such strong expressions, as had been made use of in speaking of that noble lord. Viewing him in the high situation which he filled, and in which he was bound to consider the interests of all, they ought, instead of reproaching him, to have rather be-



lieved, that he was actuated by the purest motives, and that he was endeavouring to procure that, which appeared to him to be best for the great body of the empire.

The next point Mr. Hume spoke of was with respect to the state of the Indian commerce, at the commencement of the present Charter in 1793. It would be recollected, that complaints were made, through various channels, by merchants at home and abroad, that a large proportion of British capital was rendered unproductive to this country, in consequence of the unfavourable state of exchange, rendering it difficult to get remittances to Europe. Those who had got a little property, desirous of remitting it as easily as possible, and being unwilling to lose 10 or 15 per cent. by the ordinary mode, threw their capital into foreign channels. This became a crying evil, and at length occasioned a portion of the trade to be thrown open.

Let us see, continued Mr. Hume, whether this was attended with success? What was the state of the Indian commerce, at the renewal of the Charter in 1793? According to papers laid before the House of Commons, the total value of the imports made by private British merchants was £181,710. But, in consequence of the little *alleviation* then given to the exclusion, they in-



creased, in 1798, to £881,000. This was a very great alteration; but dangers then began to press upon us, and the war on the Continent occasioned the trade to slacken very much. The British merchants also saw a new enemy coming against their commerce; an enemy who, having long sucked our blood, is now opposing us with it, he meant America.—(*Applause.*) The conduct of the Bengal merchants at that time did them honour. They saw the danger, and they memorialised the Government. The language of His Majesty's Ministers, and of the Board of Control, who dreaded the effect which might be produced, by the union of American enterprise with British capital, was extremely proper—"We will," said they, "afford you facilities for bringing home all that property which you tell us is shipped in foreign vessels." This was a laudable determination, and proved advantageous to the country; for a considerable proportion of the trade did come home—But the capability in 1798 was not the same as in 1793.

At that time the private merchants thought themselves capable of carrying on the whole surplus trade—and observed, "we will take up the entire trade of British India, as it falls from the foreigners and the American merchants." This was the tenor of their proposition, at that period, and this only. Such was the language then held



by some of those very merchants, who are now coming forward, complaining of any attempt to change the present system. Their language to the Board of Control was this:—"foreigners go to India, without restraint, and export commodities to all the states of Europe, in their own ships,—while we, the subjects of England, are degraded below the state of aliens." The last expression he did not think strictly proper,—for they knew their conditions, and could not truly designate themselves as aliens. They then state—"the objects we propose are calculated to increase the strength and prosperity of the parent state, as well as of India, by advancing the interests of the shipping, navigation, and trade of both;—the Company cannot absorb all the commerce, and the surplus is taken up by foreigners, which might be brought, in British ships, to the Thames, to the complete destruction of the foreign trade, which is permitted under the present system."

Mr. Hume continued to state, that he himself had known goods, to the amount of £20,000, shipped on board an American by an agent's house in Calcutta, sold in America, and the returns made in sufficient time to take up the bills. This surely was an occupation of British capital. Why should not this trade be carried on by British ships and seamen? Why should we



run the danger of losing the carrying trade?— These were points of great importance, not only in reference to the British merchant, but to the empire in general. Because, such a diversion of the trade tends to deprive us of that by which we are enabled to support our dignity, as a great nation. What are our navigation laws founded upon, but a proper determination that Great Britain shall obtain from her colonies as much of the carrying trade, as she can possibly manage; that she may increase the number of her ships and men; that she may extend her marine, and depress the naval power of other states.

He had often been told, when complaining of foreigners being permitted to participate in our commerce, that if they did not carry it on, we could not carry it on ourselves; but he thought, that if America was suffered to extract wealth from our colonies, by trading in articles which they did not want for their own use,—if you gave them the profit of the import to America, and the subsequent export, comprising all the benefits of the carrying trade, you deprived Great Britain of so many advantages;—for he contended that she was perfectly capable of carrying on the trade herself, and of supplying the demands of the world. We are told that the trade cannot be changed—that America



sails under a neutral flag, and that, without it, we could not carry on so much business as we do. Now, he could prove that the change of commerce was not so difficult as might be imagined. We had an instance of this fact in the situation of our own commerce. If we did not permit the Americans to supply our own colonies and the Spanish main with goods, we should have the benefit of reshipping them, and thus the strength and profit which she acquires by that branch of commerce, would revert to us.

He had formed his opinion on the evidence of the best informed men; many of whom were examined in 1809, before the House of Commons. What did Mr. Bebb, one of the Directors of the Company, say on this subject?—"England has nothing to fear from competition; she could supply the whole of Europe, if proper regulations were adopted."—Suffice it to say, that, by the policy which has been pursued, we have lost a vast portion of those benefits which we ought to derive from India—and we have furnished America with that strength which she exerts against ourselves. We have supplied her with money—a most dangerous article to place in the hands of an enemy. He told them to look at the report of Mr. Gallatin, of the 9th of November; and that there they would find, that, of



the whole resources of the American Government 1,000,000 of dollars arising from the duties paid on East-India goods ; a circumstance worthy of deep attention. These facts he was anxious should be generally known, and he was sure, when they were, no man would hesitate to sacrifice that, which he could prove to be an ideal advantage, for the public good.

As the Charter of 1793 did not present sufficient facilities to the India merchant, Lord Wellesley afforded them a certain degree of relief, in 1798, by permitting them to export, under licenses, with as few restrictions as possible. His Lordship, knowing the quantity of American shipping which filled the Indian ports, and being desirous that the surplus trade should be reserved for British subjects, with all that prudence and ability which marked his conduct in India, from his first arrival there, till his departure, permitted the trade by license. When speaking of the affairs of India, it would, in his opinion, be a great omission, if he did not pay his tribute of admiration to that excellent nobleman. No man ever exerted himself more for the benefit of the Indian empire ;—to consolidate and strengthen it, was the great object of his zeal. Some of his regulations might be objectionable ; but, we ought to overlook a few errors, if there were



any, and examine his government, not in parts, but in the whole: one of his paragraphs, on the subject of exclusion, expressly says:—"such restrictions tend to throw the trade into the hands of foreign nations, and enable them to supply the rest of Europe, which would otherwise be furnished by Great-Britain. Every principle of policy and justice calls for an extension of the trade." It was to the opinions of such men as these that we ought to look; men who have considered the subject on the foundation of public good, not of private benefit; by them we should be influenced, and not by the clamours of those who know little or nothing of the business. That our commercial interest had been affected by this admission of the Americans to a participation in the India Trade, he could prove from the Report on Indian External Commerce, laid before the House of Commons. Lord Wellesley had foretold what would be the result of permitting Americans to trade with India; and what had been the result? A constant increase of their commerce, as would be seen by the following statements.

Average of four years, 1795-6 and 1798-9:—

|                                      | Lacks of Rupees. |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Exports made by the London merchants | 60               | $\frac{3}{4}$    |
| Foreign Europe                       | -                | 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| America                              | -                | 19               |



In 1801-2, it amounted to 48 lacks of rupees, in 1804,  $53\frac{1}{2}$  lacks; and in 1807, it had increased to no less than 85 lacks of rupees;—that was, an increase of near five times the original amount within the space of nine years. Such was the result, although the supporters of the present East-India system, who were hostile to the private merchants, declared that this was a trade with which nothing more could be done. And, he was convinced, if it had not been for the foolish restrictions of America herself, the amount would have been still greater. Even in the years 1809-10, notwithstanding the partial obstruction which took place, she imported to the amount of 68 lacks of rupees. And what was the average import of the British merchant, at the same time? Only 74 lacks; being a difference of six lacks. Means ought to be taken to give the British merchant a greater extension of this trade; but from all he had seen, and heard, and read—from all he had learned, even from the servants of the Company, who had taken a general view of the subject, it appeared that the expectations held out by the Company had not been acted upon. It became a matter of great national consideration; and, if it appeared that the results had not been commensurate with the hopes entertained by the



nation, did it not demand the sedulous attention of the Legislature, to examine what change was necessary ; to consider what alteration could be made, consistent with the safety of our commercial interests, and the general advantage of the empire?

In such a state of things, they ought not to come to a hasty decision; interested opinions, which apply only to parts of the system, ought not to be considered as bearing on the whole. Therefore, every person should give his utmost assistance, in order to guard against the calamities which were likely to be produced, by allowing to the Americans, that which was refused to the British merchant. Already had we felt the evil effects of such a policy, which had furnished America with a staff to break our own heads. Now, it had been contended, that the course of commerce could not be changed ; but he thought a view of the exports from Great Britain to America, prior to the war, would tend to place this question in a clearer light. Every person was of opinion, that the non-importation act of America, would ruin England:—merchants, of great experience, in the city, exclaimed—“ America takes from us 12 or £13,000,000 in manufactures, and now we shall have nothing to do.” But it was very well known, that they took them, not for their own consumption, but to supply other countries.



By this the Americans gained a double advantage; they increased their marine, and by reshipping these goods to our own West India colonies, and the Spanish main, they enriched themselves very much. In 1805, the exports of Great Britain to all America amounted to £20,004,125; in 1806, £24,759,142. In 1807, £23,451,738; of which the United States took 11, 12, and 13 millions, respectively in those years. The restrictions of the American government then took place, and the exports to the United States, in 1808, fell to £5,000,000. Then it was said England was ruined; and even very honest men in the House of Commons made use of that language. But in fact she gained by it. Her exports to the West-Indies, Spanish America, &c. being raised to £18,173,056, from about £9,000,000. Here, then, was a complete and positive change effected, in the course of trade, in one year. And it was an incontrovertible truth that a country, whose products consist in the necessaries of life, would have purchasers for them, unless the system of civilization were destroyed. Some persons might say, this was only a single instance of a particular year, and that many merchants were ruined by their speculations to South America. The following year, 1809, however, presented a farther increase of exports, which



were carried to their destination, in our own ships. In that year our exports to the

United States, were . . . . . £7,160,768

To other parts of America . . . . 19,833,696

Making a total of . . . . . £27,291,464

And in the succeeding year, 1810, the total amount of our exports, to all parts of America, exceeded £28,000,000. Now, could it be supposed, if these speculations produced ruin, that the merchants would have persevered in them? The fact was, that some individuals were ruined, and others made a great deal of money by the trade to South America. And it was not surprising, that failures took place, since goods, the most improper for that climate, were sent out. Even *skails*, he believed, formed a part of the ventures furnished by certain individuals. It could not be imagined, that if a total failure took place, one year, merchants would pursue the same course, in the next; for it was contrary to the established principles of commercial men, to trade at a loss; although, perhaps, he might except the East-India Company, who seemed to act differently. It was his wish to shew, that the course of commerce might be changed; but that while we were the producing country, it was not the power of all the states of the world com-



lined, unless Bonaparte barbarizes the continent; and the Americans can go naked, to destroy our commerce; and every person who knows the price of labour in this country, and our facilities to create manufactures, must see the almost utter impossibility of our being undersold in the different markets.

The average exports to the United States, the West-Indies, and South America, in the year 1809-10, and 11, were 28,638,000, being a surplus amount of 3,000,000 above any year prior to the restrictions. Thus, while America was dilapidating her resources, and destroying her marine, by throwing away such an immense trade, we were increasing our strength, in the same proportion; instead of enlarging their finances, and giving that impulse to their industry, which every person ought to dread. This evidently proved, that, in spite of all difficulties, those goods which were absolutely necessary for consumption, would force themselves into the market; and, while the commerce of Great Britain remained unshackled, no power could interfere to crush it. We ought, therefore, to look to our Eastern territories, and examine what benefit could be derived from an extended commerce with a population of 60,000,000, instead of permitting foreigners to have all the advantage.—Was it to



be allowed, that they should step in, and enjoy the fruits of so much blood and treasure? Ought we not to do every thing in our power to keep those advantages ourselves? And he hoped that selfish interested motives would not be permitted to interfere with the public good.—So far from an extension of the trade injuring the port of London, he could prove that this metropolis would actually gain by it. (*Hear! hear! and laughter.*)

He did not mean to say he should be able to convince them all, though he was perfectly sensible of the truth of his position. He had heard in that Court, and at various meetings, that the grand criterion by which the uselessness of extending the trade was made evident, was the fact, that 54,000 tons of shipping had been provided for the private merchants, and, because these were not taken up, it was assumed, as a matter of course, that the exports could not be increased, even if increased means were allowed. Now he could shew, in answer to this, that the amount of our exports at present, was five times what it was at the commencement of the Charter; indeed, the exports from England by private merchants, had borne a proportionate rise with the imports, and he would demonstrate that they might have been improved in a ten-fold degree.



## EAST INDIA HOUSE.

The exports of the London merchants to India.

In 1798, was . . . . . 18½

The average of three years ending in

1802, was . . . . . 18½

Average of 1803-4 . . . . . 17½

Average of three years, ending 1807, was . . . . . 18½

Here then was an increase in the exports of the private merchants, from 18½ Lacks in 1798 to 89½ in 1807, being a period of only nine years. And yet it was asserted that the export trade could not be increased. He would state another instance particularly strong.—In the months of June and August, 1800, exports from England were very great in consequence of a trifling relaxation of the restrictions: Twenty vessels sailed in that year from the port of London, for India, with cargoes valued at £685,000. And it might easily be conceived what advantage London must have derived from the fitting out such a number of ships, providing necessary stores, paying the crews, &c. all which was done in that port. It was for him now to shew that the exports would be increased: and here it was necessary to observe, that, at the renewal of the Charter, the exports of British India amounted to 1,000,000 annually, or £629,000, and the difference between that sum and the value of the investments was



paid in specie. At that time no hopes were held out that any great increase could be effected; but to prove that the boundaries of that trade, could not be calculated upon, it was only necessary to state, that, in 1803, the exports amounted to £1,223,000, being more than double what they were ten years before; and that to a place, the exports to which were considered as having arrived at their *ne plus ultra*. As to the imports from India, by private merchants, through the Company, they amounted, in 1793, to £181,000. But, when Lord Wellesley permitted the merchants to export, in their own vessels, under licenses, an increase of upwards of £900,000 took place in one year. This much he would say, that if British merchants were allowed what they contended for, they would have brought home much more, without detriment to the country, which would, on the contrary, have been much benefited by so large a branch of trade being taken from the hands of the Americans. Mr. Colebrooke, who had studied commerce, both in its minute details and general principles, who had attentively considered the subject, both as it affected private interest and public welfare, and whose opinion was of the highest value, expressed his conviction, that if the manufactures of Great Britain were introduced to the Indian



market at a lower price, the increased demand from a population of 60,000,000 of people, would be incalculable. But no attempt had been made to lower the price, by throwing open the trade, and introducing a fair competition. No fair trial had yet been made, and it was for them to decide on the expediency and necessity of making it. Every one must recollect the warmth with which the subject had been originally taken up by the British merchants, and the numerous meetings which were held. The representations which had been made led to the alternative proposed by the British Minister:—"I am determined," said he, "convinced as I am that the statements laid before me are such as I ought to attend to, to allow an extension of the trade to British merchants—and if you refuse, I will not advocate the renewal of your Charter." The Directors, as they had no arguments at that time, insisted on their rights by Charter, and demanded, "Will you take from us what the legislature have granted?" This, however, did not avail, and a modification was agreed to. On the present occasion they had certainly advanced arguments; and, indeed, if they attempted to shelter themselves under their exclusive privileges, he hoped they would not be permitted.

At the renewal of the present Charter, in



1793, great expectations were held out to the British merchant, but never realised. A given quantity of shipping was to sail at certain stated periods, which was of great importance, as some goods, by being kept beyond a particular time, were liable to spoil, and others ought to go out at a specific day. It was also most important that the vessels should be taken up, without any political view, in all fair weather seasons, and that no improper detention should take place, by which the expense of insurance would be saved, and by which means the merchants would know when their goods were likely to arrive, that they might have the returns ready. This was of the utmost consequence, because it was very generally known, that the merchant did not trade entirely on his own capital, but made use of the manufacturer's goods, having granted bills to the amount, and it was easy to conceive the difficulties which were created, if, by any delay in sending the goods to their place of destination, the returns did not arrive in time to make good the payments. It was proved in evidence before the House of Commons, that, in consequence of delays in the sailing of the Company's shipping, bills had been sent back, and the honour of the British merchant compromised. This was what he considered one of the principal causes which operated against the increase of our East-India exports. The



hon. gentleman, who spoke before him, expressed himself in favour of a safe trade rather than a speculative one—he perfectly agreed with him in the sentiment, and would ask him, did he consider that a safe trade, where the merchant embarks his money on goods, but does not know whether they will arrive at their destination, in time to enable him to take up his bills? That certainly was not a safe trade—and, when it was carried on under such hazardous circumstances, it was no wonder that persons wished to have the system changed; but, if that change seemed likely to be detrimental, he would be the first person to come forward to oppose it.

It was generally agreed, that the ships from India ought to sail in the beginning of March, and those from England in the latter end of June; these were the fair-weather seasons, and the Company stipulated that the ships should sail at those periods. But he would prove, that they had broken their engagement. Out of seventy ships which sailed from England for India, and *vice versa*, in 1806, 7, and 8, thirty-nine sailed out of season, as appears from an account laid before the House of Commons, being more than the one-half; and of forty others, no less than twenty-nine sailed out of the regular time. The sailing of these ships did not depend either on



the apprehensions of an enemy, or the bad state of the weather, but they were delayed at various places, and their departure made subservient to the private interests of the Company, with which the British merchant had nothing at all to do. This clearly shewed that the sanction held out was at variance with the conduct pursued. Now, to shew what a private trade was capable of doing, he would state one or two facts, which he had got documents to prove. In 1779, the culture of indigo was commenced under the auspices of the East-India Company.—What was the state of that trade in 1786? Only 240,011lbs. were imported into England in that year from India: we were then tributary to America and Manilla for a proper supply of indigo. The trade was, however, given up to British merchants; and sure he was, if the Company had retained it, the result would have been extremely different. Under the new management, no less than 5,570,000lbs. of indigo were imported from India, in the year 1810. This was a fact which could not be contradicted; and shewed, that the extension of our Indian commerce gave us that for which, otherwise, we should, to this hour, have been dependent on America.

He said we were a great state, capable of revolving in our own circle; and that we ought not to be tributary to any other state, but other states



should rather be rendered tributary to us. Cotton was another very important article in our manufactures: yet, in 1805, we were supplied almost entirely by Spain, Portugal, and America.—What were our own resources? Of the whole importation, amounting to 59,682,000lbs, India furnished only 355,000lbs.,  $\frac{1}{188}$ th of the actual quantity. But when America evinced her hostility, which he hoped would revert with redoubled force on her own head, it was necessary to seek for a supply elsewhere. Meetings were held at Manchester and other places, and the Ministers were applied to, as the guardians of that staple manufacture. What was the conduct of Ministers? They saw all the world united against Great Britain, and that she had no other place to look to for support, but her own colonies, and they immediately turned their eyes towards India. Messrs. David Scott and Co., Bruce, De Ponthieu, and other eminent merchants, were applied to, and they said, “We are capable of supplying from India every ounce of cotton wanted for our manufactures, if we are allowed to navigate our vessels as we like, to load them without restrictions, and to sail when we please.” What was the result? The Secret Report of a Committee of the House of Commons pointed out the necessity of permitting the importation.



No sooner was this known in India, than the merchants at Bombay prepared a vast quantity for the purpose of sending to England; so true it is, that individual energy will outstrip the tardy proceedings of an immense politico-commercial establishment. The Company, however, would not then allow the exportation from particular circumstances. Without going into detail, however, they should look to the ultimate fact. In 1810, the total importation of cotton was 136,570,100lbs. of which India supplied 23,000,000, being  $\frac{1}{6}$ th of the whole instead of  $\frac{1}{16}$ th. This was a result which ought to be viewed with pride; it did not need a comment, as the facts spoke for themselves. Now, if, in those instances, they were furnished with a distinct proof of the benefit which an open commerce had produced; if, in the articles of cotton and indigo, so immense an increase of exportation had taken place—an increase beyond the most sanguine expectations,—could any man, having considered these circumstances, come forward and point out the boundaries farther than which our trade could not be carried? We were told, and he could not help noticing the liberality of the remark, that those who called for an extension of the trade, were poor, ignorant, deluded people; and a story was told of one of



them, who said, “ I have signed a petition, but I do not know for what.” But this, it is said, is not the way in the city of London.—We do not act without deep consideration.—Yet this assertion was at variance with the language he had heard in the city.—“ Go away,” said an honorable gentleman, at a recent meeting, “ consider that your own interest is at stake—it is not the common interest of the nation, but the interest of the British merchants in London that you are to protect. Therefore, go home, and endeavour to do away the delusion by which the country is misled.—Point out to the petitioners their danger, and shew them that a compliance with their will must effect their ruin.” Now all this he thought very useless; for if they try once, and find that the speculation will not answer, they will not try a second time—therefore there is a bound to their exercise of the gift; for he was sure no man would run headlong two or three times successively on the same mischief.

This was not the case, however, with the Company, who have been, for years, trading with a positive knowledge that they sustained a loss. And for what? Why, for the good of the country; and certainly their patriotism cannot be too highly praised. But he would not attach to them all the credit, which they gave to



themselves. He would say, as a trading company, it was mal-policy to act as they did. If it was the case, they ought not to have pursued such conduct; and he would undertake to shew, that the India commerce was a ruinous business.

The Chairman himself expressly said, "the India trade has long ceased to be of importance either to the Company or to individuals." If, therefore, this was a statement of fact; if the India commerce was so unproductive as to be no longer of importance to the Company; could there be any solid argument for withholding it from others? was it not preposterous that they should still preserve it? Therefore, as a friend to the Company, he wished this delusion to be done away.—(*Hear ! hear !*) He repeated, it was a delusion; and if the Company really attached no importance to the trade, why did they trouble their heads about it? Instead of carrying on a losing trade, it would be better for them to reduce their establishments, and to pension such of their servants as might be thrown out of employment. If the trade was disadvantageous to us, why should it not be given up to those who conceived they could improve it? Mr. Bebb, in his evidence before the House of Commons, expressly stated, that the trade might be rendered advantageous by the British merchants, and that



the East-India Company had nothing to dread from its extension. If, therefore, a man possessing so much information on the subject, who had resided long in India, and maturely considered the question, came at last to this conclusion—if those who were most intimately acquainted with East India affairs made a similar declaration—if the British merchants concurred in this opinion, and, more than that, were ready to embark in this trade—if these facts did not tend to satisfy the mind of gentlemen, he knew not what would satisfy them. He next stated, that he should endeavour to shew what had been the state of the commerce between India and this country for several years past; and then let it be considered whether it was advantageous to the Company or otherwise. The accounts of the Company have been so mixed, the political and commercial items have been so joined together, that the best informed persons cannot divide them. A committee of the House of Commons, which sat for months on the business, have declared it impossible to make the separation, so as to draw a fair commercial deduction. Every person who has been in India knows the accuracy with which the accounts of the Company are kept; the extraordinary correctness of the board of revenue, than which none deserves



more praise, is generally admitted; from documents made up by them he should now take his statement. In inquiring what were the resources of the Company, it was necessary to divide them into three heads: 1st, territorial revenue; 2d, China trade; 3d, trade to India. [*The hon. gentleman here went into an elaborate statement, under each of these heads, of which the following is only an abstract.*] He first stated, that the territories in India were indebted to the Company in a large sum, about £5,778,000; making, with a variety of items, a total of £6,800,000, expended on the civil government and military operations in India. The profits of the China trade were £16,602,852, not including 10 per cent. on invoice profits outwards, which make the whole £18,142 619. The deductions from this, by rate of exchange on bills, captures, &c. were £2,500,795, leaving the profit and loss on the China trade £16,641,824. This was taken from the years 1792-3 to the years 1809-10. The statement of the profit and loss on the India trade, he said, he should take from a document laid before Parliament. The profit on this trade, for six years, was £1,853,276, the loss on two years £299,148, leaving £1,554,128; to this, adding profit on goods outward, £271,187, makes the total pro-



fit £1,825,315. From this was to be deducted, for various losses, and for insurance, £2,168,192; making loss on this trade, in eight years, £342,877, without taking any one of the many charges to be added for payments to owners of lost ships, specie to government, &c. There was a loss on the India trade, in three years, of £355,846; and, in the same period, a gain on the China trade of £3,504,195.

If, therefore, government have offered the Company the renewal of their charter, on terms which every thing of any value, for it is to be remembered that the China trade alone enables the Company to pay their dividends on India stock, such an offer ought not to be rashly rejected. An hon. Director, of whose abilities and attention to the affairs of the Company it was impossible to speak in too high terms, stated in opposition to what fell from him, that the India trade was a matter of the utmost importance to the Company; that it enabled them to pay their dividends; and if they did not possess it, that the whole system would fall by its own weight—and observed, that the profits on the trade were from one to £400,000 *per annum*.—Now he would take the medium, and suppose a profit of £200,000 *per annum*, for 19 years, which would give a sum of near £4,000,000—and he would be



very glad to learn, if they really derived this profit both on the India and China trade, how their debts continued to increase in England, and by what means these profits were absorbed and lost to the country? But that the truth was, as he had distinctly proved, there was a positive loss on the India trade. On this he rested, and on this he grounded his reasoning. He could not forbear, therefore, again urging on the attention of the court, that if Ministers were disposed to give them every thing that was valuable—if they were disposed to continue that system of management, which secures the happiness of millions in India; if they were willing to continue to the Company the exclusive possession of the China trade, as a boon, for their rights ceased with the charter—ought they not, with a good grace, to yield up the Indian trade; in which the country must and will participate, whether they would or not? If Government offer to continue to us the whole of our India territory, with a revenue of £16,000,000, burdened with an expenditure somewhat less than the receipts at present; but which, from the reduction of many of our establishments, that ought to be looked for, will, at a future period, be considerably less than the receipts—if they give us a breathing time for the payment of our debts—if they give us, in short, every thing worth having,



—is it for the Company to throw down the gauntlet of opposition to all negociation ? When they offer fairly, ought we, the proprietors of East-India stock, to refuse their proposition ? For 'he drew a wide distinction between the court of proprietors and the court of directors, as the latter might be influenced to carry on a losing trade, for the purpose of still preserving the patronage attached to it.—Ministers very naturally told the Company, they could see no reason why they ought to have the exclusive power of conducting the Indian trade, when the profits, by their own account, were less than nothing—nor was it to be expected, that either Ministers, or the representatives of the people in parliament, would take the part of a few of h's Majesty's subjects, against the interests of the rest of the country. Ought not gentlemen to deliberate with great caution before they proceed to deliver statements against Ministers ? Ought they not to pause before they give a decisive refusal ? Have they not acted rashly in breaking off the negociation themselves—in saying, almost expressly, “ they will not even consider “ the proposition of Ministers ?” What was that proposition ? It was nothing more than to give up a part of the import trade to the outports,—and were they, by withholding that, to lose the whole of their immunities ? There was a considerable loss



incurred by the Company, in consequence of the way in which the India trade was carried on—and there was strong reason to infer, from the documents he had quoted, that it might be greatly increased, and advantageously conducted by private individuals.—But then they come to the grand point.—“ It,” (say the Company) “ the extension “ is granted, then we shall have Europeans going “ out to India, in vast numbers—what description “ of persons would then go out?—Unlicensed adventurers, by whose misconduct you will risk “ the subversion of the government.”—(*Hear ! hear !*) Mr. Hume said he wished them to hear, for it was a subject of great consequence.

Are the sovereigns of India, holding under their sway and authority an army of 155,000 men, 20,000 of them the troops of his Majesty, are they to be afraid of a few raggamuffins, who may run away from their ships ? Are they to be frightened by a few straggling vagabonds ? They, who are possessed of so many fortresses, garrisoned by their own troops ? The captains of vessels trading to India are highly respectable, and superior, in nautical knowledge, generally speaking, to the officers in his Majesty’s service ; and he hoped, if their ships were taken from them, by the new arrangements, they would be properly remunerated.

But what vessels were proposed to be ad-



mitted to the India trade?—None under 400 tons burthen.—Now, would any man seriously tell him, that the owner of a ship of 400 tons would send out persons to India, in whom he could not place perfect confidence? In the Company's ships; the captains attended merely to the business of the vessel, and had nothing to do with the cargo; but the persons appointed to command the ships fitted out by private merchants, for the India trade, would not only be captains, but factors or agents; men in whom their employers could implicitly rely. Such an objection as this falls to the ground without argument. But, it was said, the sailors would be worse than they generally are—he thought they would be better than they are now. How are the East-Indiamen manned at present? By vagrants of all countries, picked up by crimps, and sent on board without the knowledge of their officers, or of each other. Did their officers know them? Certainly not. Did they repose confidence in them? Most assuredly not.—On the other hand, he said, that, by extending the trade to the outports, the natives of this country would embark for India—men who are resident here, and who would leave their wives and families behind them, as hostages for their return, and pledges for their correct conduct while abroad. Therefore, the danger to be apprehended from the in-



flux of Europeans would be diminished, not increased.

But it was observed, the numbers who go out would be unbounded. That must be entirely regulated by the trade; for no man would send out goods, or embark his capital, without the expectation of being reimbursed. This was a self-evident fact. But, say the opponents of the extension, those people will colonize, and the oppression of the natives will follow. This he was sure never could be the case, while the laws were administered in India with so much justice and equity. There was as much civil liberty there as there was in this country; the very prejudices of the people were attended to. To prove how solicitous the Company were to protect their subjects, he would mention a case which occurred a few years ago. Two or three young men, on an excursion from their college at Calcutta, set fire to a mud cottage. What was the result? Why, a gentleman of the name of Grant, an officer in the Company's service, on the point of joining his regiment, was arraigned for the offence, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged, which punishment was afterwards commuted to transportation for life to Botany Bay. This, surely, was a proof that the interests of the natives were deeply considered. Every man's property was as firmly secured to him in that country as in this; and the



judges of the different courts, he was proud to say, in vindication of the Company, and in opposition to some unfounded reports which had been circulated, were a most meritorious class of persons, remarkable for their integrity and ability. Though the learning and talents of these gentlemen were more peculiarly honourable to themselves, still they reflected credit on the Company, who selected them, and whose servants they might be considered. The police of India was also admirable. He wished to God there was as vigilant a police in England. Every unknown straggler is immediately seized there : no person can possibly reside in India without the license of government. If he gets into the country, he is sure to be apprehended by some of the *Chokees*, or guards established to prevent unlicensed residence ; and the first police officer he meets arrests him, and claims the reward allowed. He is considered as a deserter, and a price being set on his head, he has no chance of escape ; for, even if he passes one or two stations, he cannot ultimately get away. Such is the excellent police of that country.—[*The honorable Gentleman was here interrupted by the cry of Question.*]

These are facts, he continued, which every officer in the Company's service must be aware of ; and which, if any person is not willing



to hear, he may indulge his feelings, by going away.

But he was told of another fear, that the Europeans would obtain influence, and acquire property in India. Those who dread this event ought to know, that in India an European cannot acquire property; the law completely prevents him, and if he purchases an acre of land from a native, the latter may cite him before a magistrate, and demand his ground back again. The magistrate would immediately tell the European, "What you have done is illegal, and you have lost your money." Another ground of fear was stated to be, that the new comers would pass our territories, and excite the Princes of the neighbouring states against us. But those who advanced this, should know, that there is an article in every treaty between the Company and the native Princes, by which the latter engage to cause to be arrested, imprisoned, and finally sent to the nearest port, every European or American who may enter their territories without the Company's license. These treaties were accessible to every person; and, on that point, he need say no more.

As to the fear of insurrection, which was mentioned in the Report of the Select Committee, every person who has been in India must be aware how little danger is to be apprehended



from the descendants of Europeans in that country. The character of Europeans soon degenerates there ; they soon ~~cease~~ to be that formidable and enterprising species of men, ready to act as their ambition prompts them. Every person knows that the descendants of the Portuguese in India are more despicable than the natives themselves. What fear, then, can be excited by such a race, without property, and without spirit ? We are informed that Europeans will get to India with greater facility after the extension, than they could before. But what cause of prevention has hitherto existed ? Why cannot they go there now ? Because the laws meet them on their landing. There is no difficulty in getting out ; but this is useless, as the police destroys every chance of their escape into the country. What does Marquis Wellesley say on this subject ? " The powers of the Government in India," says his Lordship, " operating in full force against unlicensed individuals, will prevent any irregular intercourse between that country and England for sinister purposes."

The opening of the trade, therefore, can produce no danger, while we hold, as I hope we always shall hold, unimpaired, those salutary laws which are eminently calculated to secure the safety of our Indian empire. So perfect is the police system there, that if a sailor is



wanted to go on board his ship at Bombay, the officers can bring him to his boat in ten minutes. *[The cry of QUESTION here became so great, that Sir H. INGLES addressed the Court, and entreated they would hear the Hon. Proprietor, however long he might choose to speak, or however irrelevant his arguments might be, as he wished to hear every thing that could be said against the interests of the Company, for there were many Gentlemen present perfectly ready to answer every point.]*

Mr. Hume resumed, by stating that, if he had made use of a single irrelevant fact, he really did not know it—he had endeavoured to combat, with facts and arguments, those fears and doubts which had been conjured up. If any dread was indulged from the escape of a few runaways, what could we think of that government, which had upheld our interests against the designs of France and of the native powers, if we now conceived it likely to be overturned by so contemptible a force?—It behoved that Court to consider the subject carefully and maturely—He drew a distinction between the Court of Proprietors and that of Directors, and wished it to be so understood. That of the former, he said, ought to be to secure to their country the greatest proportion of advantages, without sacrificing their rights and claims. In spite of the statement of Mr. Dundas, that the right to revenue had always been claimed by the



public, he was decidedly of opinion, in which he was fortified by the most able lawyers, that, by the 5th of Anne, chap. 10, and the 3d of Geo. II. chap. 14. s. 2, the revenues of India appertained to them.

By these acts it is provided, that though government should repay the Company the money they had borrowed, the Company should still continue a body corporate and politic, having all their territories, &c. secured. The Company's right he considered, therefore, as indisputable—being founded on the law of the land; but, although the government could not take the territories, yet they could take away the exclusive trade to India and China. Now, if it appeared that the dividends were paid by the latter trade, and they offered it to the Company—and if it also appeared that the profit from the India trade had, at least, been problematical—he thought it was their duty to close with that proposition, which was consistent with the claims of the Company; and, when so great an interest was at stake, not to quarrel about a trifling investment. He hoped the Court would act as it did on a former occasion, and abstain from whatever might create irritation, and endeavour to procure what was most valuable, by permitting the public to participate in the India trade. He would rather that his Majesty's Ministers should have another opportunity of ob-



serving the moderation of the Court, and, therefore, he did not think the Resolutions proposed ought to be carried—the Company ought to consider what the consequence would be, if the Ministers were supported in this measure by the country at large. They had no right to expect that the Representatives of the nation would not defend the interests of the people with which they were entrusted, although the members of the Common Council for the city of London had already prejudged the cause, and expressed their determination to oppose the measure, right or wrong.

Sir *T. Metcalfe* spoke to order. He could not permit the patience of the Court to be abused, by listening to a libel on the Common Council for the City London, who were doing every thing in their power to serve the Company. He could not permit the honourable Proprietor to accuse them of betraying the confidence of the people at large, without noticing it. On this particular point he (Mr. Hume) had transgressed all bounds; and, on many others, he had gone much too far.

Mr. *Hume* resumed.—It was not his intention to give offence; he merely stated what had been expressed by those gentlemen in their advertisements. If he had erred, he was the first to apologize. If the facts he had stated were correct, it behoved the Court seriously to consider whether



they would agree to a long string of hostile resolutions. With the permission of the Court, he would propose a Resolution founded on that of 1793, as an amendment. The Court ought to look to the interests of individuals, and the benefit of the public, which he maintained were perfectly compatible, and act a firm and temperate part. But there was a vast distinction between violent opposition, and temperate firmness. He then moved that all the words after the word "that," be omitted, and the following be substituted :

" This Court deeming it prudent and proper to acquiesce in the principles and preliminaries stated by his Majesty's Ministers, through the President of the Board of Control, in the papers laid before the Court, respecting the renewal of the Company's Charter, with certain provisions in favour of the merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain, and the Outports of these realms ;"

" RESOLVED—That it be referred back to the Court of Directors, to continue their negotiation for the carrying those principles into effect ; this Court relying on due attention being paid to secure to the Company as great advantage in their commerce, as is consistent with their claims upon the public, and the prosperity and interests of the country at large ; and for that purpose, by proper regulations, to guard against the mischiefs that



might arise from disputes in India, or in England, between those engaged in commerce ; to protect the Trade from smuggling ; and those consequences which are now dreaded by a departure from the present established system ; and, particularly, to prevent the residence or interference of Europeans in any part of India, so as to endanger the Company's Government there, in their exclusive administration of the territorial possessions which they now have, or may hereafter obtain, as well in their revenue as in their individual and military departments.

“ That the Directors be instructed to endeavour to obtain from his Majesty's Ministers, a guarantee to the Proprietors for their stock, capital, and dividends, in case they should take the territories under their management : and that as the Company consider themselves as guardians of the prosperity of the empire in India, and protectors of the liberty and happiness of the millions who live under their government ; reposing confidence in the ability of their Directors and the wisdom of the Legislature, that every possible safeguard will be provided to prevent danger to the empire, and injury to its people.”

Prior to the Amendment being seconded,

Mr. *Whitshed Keene* rose, and spoke at considerable length ; but, from the weakness of his



voice, much of his speech was inaudible. He said, that although near fifty years had elapsed since his name had appeared on their books as a Proprietor of India stock, yet he had never spoken in that Court before. This had been occasioned by two causes; first, the consciousness of a feeble voice, and, still more, the consciousness of feeble talents, which did not enable him to say any thing worthy their attention; but he apprehended the question then before the Court, consisting of the proposition which his Majesty's Ministers were pleased to say they would recommend, though compressed in a very few lines, was yet so pregnant with circumstances, that if every gentleman who had delivered his opinion on it had continued the discussion for hours, still some points worthy of remark would remain. He had listened with great attention to the Gentleman who had just sat down, and who had thrown all the light in his power on the subject, and investigated it in a commercial and political point of view. Previous to that, however, he had entered into a panegyric, honourable in the highest degree to that great Company, both in India and England, in every word of which he most perfectly concurred, being persuaded, that whatever irregularities might have marked their first territorial accessions, when the Company became



a substantive body, they entirely ceased. From the time that Lord Cornwallis improved the salaries of the agents in India, which before that period were so small as to induce individuals to have recourse to illicit means of making profit, and introduced a liberal and judicious policy; from that time, he was convinced, the purity of the Company's Government, both at home and abroad, had been surpassed by none in the world. Agreeing with the Hon. Gentleman, as he did, on those points, he was inclined, notwithstanding the detail he had gone into, to think that the conclusion to be deduced from them was very different from that which he had drawn.

Although he had not been much accustomed to examine the details of financial and commercial measures, yet he had not been inattentive to transactions, at home and abroad, for the last thirty-five years. He by no means wished to detract from the ability and firmness of mind displayed by Ministers on the present occasion; but he must remark, that looking to the liberty of exporting a certain quantity of goods which the Company conceded in 1723, and the additional facility *granted by licence in 1802*, the principles on which the Ministers of that day acted, appeared directly opposite to the motives by which his Majesty's present Ministers seemed to be influenced: in proof of this, he would



read an extract from an authentic record which he held in his hand—[Mr. KERR here read an extract from a letter written in 1800, by Mr. Dundas, to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Court of Directors, in which the exclusive commercial privileges of the Company are advocated, and the necessity of their retaining the Government of the Indian Empire is strongly enforced.] This statement, he acknowledged, had made a very deep impression on his mind, and whatever respect he might have for the talents of His Majesty's present Ministers, he could not help thinking, that they had failed to invalidate these arguments. — He would not follow the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) through all his commercial details, for there were many Proprietors, whose attention, he could have no doubt, had been drawn to them. But, though he was not calculated to enter into those minute statements, yet he would be allowed to form an opinion of the results that might be expected from the change now proposed. He should be very sorry to alarm the country by noticing any remote or visionary danger, but there were some circumstances which he felt it was his duty to state. That great Company had very justly expatiated on the magnificence of their establishments; the enlarged scale of their shipping; and the bene-



fit the navy had derived from them : they had dwelt on the number of persons in their employ, and various other points, of minor importance, to a commercial body of men. Now, he thought the channels of trade could not be directed from so immense a body, without producing much injury, and could only be justified by the vital interests of the country being at stake, and a certainty that we should be benefited by the change.

He said, he knew not whether it was generally understood that, in time of war, the royal docks were not sufficient to repair the wear and tear of our fleets. Now, it was known, that, according to the present establishment of the India Company, the River Thames was a great naval arsenal, and, were the Company to be considered as a naval power, they would have a right to rank as the third in Europe. They were calculated to supply that number of ships which the royal yards could not do ; and they were capable of sending out five or six ships of the line to aid the royal navy. If the country were deprived of these advantages, the consequences would be most serious. And, in his opinion, such would be the operation of the proposition which had been made for granting the outports the liberty of importing from, and exporting to, every part of the Indian empire. Some persons said, that if



the shipping was taken from one part of the country, it would find its way to another : but the ports of Bristol and Liverpool were not qualified to admit such vessels as those employed by the East-India Company—their waters would not permit it. The effect then would be to destroy the great naval arsenal of the Thames, without furnishing an equivalent. Perhaps the petitioners would not be so eager to break up that naval arsenal, if they knew the immense expense which must be incurred to form another. He recollected a petition being presented to the House of Commons, from persons interested in the formation of a naval arsenal, at Milford Haven—no part of Britain affords greater facilities for dock-yards, &c. but it was found that it would be necessary to have fortifications there, and a garrison to defend it ; and these considerations put an end to the project, however good in itself. Portsmouth and Plymouth were guarded in like manner; but the naval arsenals of the River Thames, were equally serviceable, without the accumulated expense. These things struck him as very important, and decided his opinion on the subject.

The petitioners from the outports, who claim an unrestrained commerce, complain that the monopoly of the East-India Company is an encroachment on the rights and privileges of



the people: Now, there was no man more inclined to support their rights than he was; but he would not be actuated by any specious reasoning to sacrifice the interest of his country to a misapplication of that principle. The present abridgement of the right of an indiscriminate Indian traffic, he felt convinced was most necessary, and its advantages were infinitely greater than its inconveniences. All laws were made for the well-being of society; by them our natural rights are, to a certain degree, restrained: but order and harmony are the result. They were all sensible of the benefits which the East-India Company had poured on the nation, and, influenced by that knowledge, he *did* think it ill became the country to tolerate such a clamour.

He declared that though he had not much to do with commerce, and was not qualified to judge on affairs of that description, yet, from his own knowledge, it appeared to him morally impossible that the petitioners could benefit by participating in the trade of the Company. The advantage which the Company derived from long established intercourse with India, from a mature experience in the manners and customs of the people, and from the excellence of their commercial arrangements, must give them an infinite superiority over other merchants. It was



not his intention to enter into a discussion of the moral effects which the proposed alteration would infallibly produce, and which were certainly of the utmost moment. He should merely observe, that the measure, if acceded to, would not be less injurious to the state than to the East-India Company. The hon. gentleman concluded by moving the question of adjournment, till the following day.

Mr. *Hume* said, he should be glad to know, why his amendment, which was regularly seconded, had been handed back from the chair.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* answered, that the amendment moved by the honourable proprietor had been handed up from the chair, and the question was asked, 'Is it seconded?' to which no answer had been returned. It was handed up when the honourable proprietor (Mr. Keene) was far advanced in his speech.—The question of adjournment had been since moved and seconded, and took precedence.

Mr. *Randle Jackson* stated, that he and several gentlemen about him had partaken in the error which had occurred.—The amendment, when handed up, was seconded by Mr. Lewin; he himself, however, requested the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) to withhold it for a time, as Mr. Keene had begun his speech. He was



desirous, among the many other claims they had on the favour of the public, to add those of candour and liberality, towards every party, in every quarter, who might conceive it proper to raise a voice against them. And he should have risen, immediately after the honourable gentleman, to have answered him, to the best of his ability, and he thought he could have answered him effectually, but he was anxious for every person who took that side of the question, to be courted and invited to deliver their sentiments. He renewed that invitation. Let every gentleman attend in his place, and declare his sentiments with freedom and frankness, as that gentleman (Mr. Hume) had done. He should be sorry if any feeling of interest could make them forget that they came there as British citizens, not as mere proprietors of East India stock. He hoped the question of order would not prevent a decision on the amendment.

Mr. *Hume*, said, he wished the amendment to lie on the table, for decision at a future time.

Sir *H. Inglis* stated that it was for the Court to consider whether the amendment was not such as should now be decided? He was sure it was not fit to lie long on the table, without a decision. The honourable gentleman be-



gan his speech with a panegyric on the East India Company and their establishments; but the whole tenor of his observations was to destroy the only power the East India Company possessed to support those establishments. On two points touched by the honourable gentleman, he should make a few remarks. The first was *Indigo*. The honourable gentleman did not seem to recollect, that Indigo formed a large item in the early establishment of the Company. They gave it up for the purpose of encouraging the trade in our American and West Indian colonies. When America separated from the mother country, and Indigo was not grown in the West Indies, by the fostering care of the Company, the Trade was renewed in the East, and Europe was now supplied from India; but it was owing wholly to the exertions of the Company. They encouraged it, and under their auspices the private merchants carried it on. Another article of import mentioned by the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) was Cotton. But he had not told them how the merchants had fared.—Did they benefit by the importation? No, they did not;—what was imported in 1810, was then, in 1813, still locked up in the Company's warehouses.

After some further conversation, Mr. Knapp withdrew his motion of adjournment—the amend-



ment was ordered to lie on the table—and the Court, adjourned to Friday, Jan. 22.

---

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 22.

The Court assembled at twelve o'clock, pursuant to adjournment.—The proceedings of the last Court having been read,—The Chairman (Sir *Hugh Inglis*) stated, that the Court was met, by adjournment, to take into farther consideration the papers recently laid before it, on the subject of the renewal of the Company's charter. As Parliament would meet early in next month, it was most desirable that the Court of Directors should be furnished, before that period, with their decision on this important question; he therefore earnestly hoped that they would come to a decision this day. Since the last meeting, he had heard from the *Earl of Buckinghamshire* in consequence of something which had passed in that Court, on Tuesday last. He believed the shortest and best way to bring it before their notice, was to read the letter as part of his speech; indeed it was the only regular way in which it would come before that Court. [*He here read the letter, for the purport of which vide Appendix.*]



Sir *Hugh Inglis*, in continuation, declared, that he apprehended this letter ought not to interfere with the main debate. The question now before the Court was the original motion, and the amendment, which had been moved on it. If any gentleman wished to speak on the subject of the letter, an opportunity would offer hereafter. But really, he did not see it was necessary at the present moment. What was stated on a former occasion, by the hon. proprietor (*Mr. Davis*), had been replied to, by the noble Lord, in a very satisfactory manner; that the circumstance took place, he did not doubt—any more than he did its having escaped his lordship's memory.

*Mr. R. Jackson* said, the hon. gent. (*Mr. Davis*) was very desirous to state, that the circumstance alluded to in his lordship's letter, was not the same to which he had referred; and which was mentioned, not from any disrespectful motive, but as an occurrence in which the interference of his lordship was highly honourable to his feelings.

*Mr. Robert Grant* then rose, and was called to by the chair. There was also a general call among the proprietors upon that gentleman; he, however, gave way to.

*Mr. Davis*, who said, that he felt very much obliged for the indulgence they gave him:



—he was unwilling to address them, this day, and would not trespass on their time, after the patient attention with which they honoured him on Tuesday last, but that the letter of the noble lord demanded an explanation from him.

Some time ago, he contended in the Court, that, in his humble opinion, the trade to India was then as open as it could be, beneficially to the public and serviceable to the state. And his opinion was founded on this, that; in the last ten years of his life, he could have shipped through the medium of the East India Company, 5000 tons more than he really did ship. He knew the act specified 3000 tons; but he also knew he could have gone to their shipping clerk, and, if he paid for the freight, he could have got 5000 tons additional. Knowing that 5000 tons could thus be obtained, and that 3000 were not occupied, he concluded that the trade was open to all good purposes. The answer was, the trade is open, but the freight is so high that no prudent man can ship goods. This was what he had to contend against, and he adduced two instances to prove the truth of his opinion. If they had favoured him with a hearing of three or four hours, he could have quoted many more. (*Laughter*) The proofs were these—last season, at Calcutta, thirty ships belonging to the Company could not dispose of



their cargoes; a petition was drawn up and signed by the captains of these ships, calling on Lord Minto to remit the customary duties, because the market was so glutted, that they could not get rid of these goods. He then went back, as far as he could, about 17 years since, to the year 1795; he was then at Madras, and remembered when the *Rodney* arrived there: soon after her arrival, Lord Hobart, now Earl of Buckinghamshire, found it necessary to order her return to England; she had on board an investment amounting to £12,000, composed of various articles, Manchester goods, Yorkshire cloths, and Sheffield and Birmingham ware. The investment was divided into two parts, £4,000 worth of the goods being intended for the Madras market, the remaining £8,000 for that of Bengal — The quantity intended for Madras was sold; but, when the vessel was ordered back to England, it threw the additional £8,000 on the market. Neither shop nor store-keepers would buy the goods. The captains strove to retail them; a sort of business he did not like to witness—for he would rather see them Commanders or Sailors, than Chapman or Hawkers. The Earl of Buckinghamshire met the Captain, (Garrather,) at a private party, at the house of a Mr. Chase, and very kindly offered to transmit his money through the Company's treasury. But,



as he said before, there was no money to be procured. The next scheme devised was a lottery, for the purpose of relieving the Captain from his difficulties. And he believed that a copy of the very subscription paper was then at his house in the country, but of this he was not sure. He applied lately to Capt. Carruthers, however, on the subject, and received the answer read to the Court on Tuesday last, and which he again produced. [See debate of Tuesday, page 10] Speaking from memory, he assured the Court, on the honor of a gentleman, he was convinced the name of Lord Hobart stood at the head of that list. When his Lordship mentioned the case of Captain Hunt, he stated another circumstance in favour of his argument; for it appeared that he was also distressed.—He was influenced by no private motive: if the trade were thrown open it might rather serve him; but he was desirous that the manufacturers of the country should not be misled: He was desirous that they should not be ruined by speculators: who, having made their experiment, and failed, would throw all the *onus* on the Company, if their danger was not fairly described to them.

*Sir, Hugh Inglis* believed the Court perfectly satisfied with the explanation given by the hon. proprietor, and urged the Court to proceed with



the debate on the subject of the amendment that had been proposed at their last meeting.

*Mr. Morris* said, he was not prepared to speak at large on this occasion, but wished to be indulged with a remark on an hon<sup>ble</sup> proprietor's (Mr. Hume) quotation, in support of his argument, for an open trade. He professed to have quoted from Mr. Colebrook; that quotation, however, did not belong to Mr. Colebrook; it was extracted from a joint production of Mr. Lambert and Mr. Colebrook. The former gentleman was one of the most speculative merchants in Calcutta; but it was not certain that his speculations were so successful as to attach any great importance to his opinion—nor did he think him a person to whom the Court should look for a sound opinion. (*Hear! hear!*) He was certain that the exports of this country could not be increased by opening the India trade, and that it was the grossest delusion to hold out such expectations. What would be the result if the petitioners obtained their demand? Their hopes being disappointed, would they not come back to the Ministers with redoubled clamour? Would they not exclaim, “you have been the aiders and abettors of our delusion;—you, whose justice and wisdom should have checked our career,—your compliance has ruined us;—and



would they not call for a remuneration? What then would be their new request?—"give us some part of the China trade, we know *that* at least is beneficial:"—for the Court must be aware, that those obliging gentlemen had offered to take that trade likewise out of the hands of the Company. The hon. gentleman said that reserving the China trade was a boon; he could not see it in that light. They should go to Parliament, relying on the wisdom and equity of their cause, and on that alone; and if they could not make out that cause as a right, he, for his part, should disclaim the receiving it as a favour.

No man could doubt that these encroachments would increase, if not strongly opposed, till the utter ruin of the Company was effected. But he did not believe, whatever the information of the hon. gentleman might be, that the Ministers were so steeled by the representations of the petitioners as to shut their eyes against the dictates of justice and policy.

That gentleman had told them, too, with much *sang froid*, that they might curtail their establishments; but the vital interests of the country were so intimately interwoven with the prosperity of the Company, that the one could not be affected without injuring the other. What was the situation of India now? Had not Lord Minto told them that they were without a rival, and without



a foe in that country ; that all was peaceable and quiet ? Yet it was at this moment, when they stood on such a proud eminence, that they were called upon to make this dangerous experiment, which, he was convinced, could produce no possible good to the petitioners, but would certainly ruin the great emporium of commerce, *the city of London* ; and every thing valuable to the Company, would probably fall with it. He spoke from the situation of this country at present ; and as truth, equity, justice, and sound policy were in their favour, he trusted Ministers would be influenced by them all.

He hoped the subject would be properly discussed, and trusted they should not be told, *sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*, on which principle the Earl of Buckinghamshire's letter appeared to have been written. The noble Lord seemed to think there was no alternative ; but the nation had an alternative, and the privileges of the Company must be renewed unimpaired and unshaken, because they were founded on the basis of justice and policy, and because the interests of the Company were closely interwoven with the essence of the constitution. Let Ministers but place their unhallowed hands on one single brick of this vast edifice, and the whole would fall to the ground. (*Hear ! hear !*) Ignorant men



might destroy that fabric which was reared by wisdom ; they might pull down that building which it had taken ages to erect, and which had added to the strength and beauty of the empire ; but, he asked, was such ruin to be occasioned by a set of adventurers, who laboured under the grossest delusion ? For it was physically impossible, from the constitution of India, that the consequences of opening the trade could be any other but ruinous.

At what moment, too, and under what circumstances did they make this appeal ? They made it under the influence of calamity and distress ; it did not proceed from sober reflection nor from the sound dictates of reason ; they had not argued with coolness and deliberation. Those who were acquainted with the nature of the trade with India must be aware, from its climate and other circumstances, that its markets were continually fluctuating, and that the greatest losses were sometimes incurred. He would not detain the Court farther than to observe, that such were the policy and equity of their claims, and such the honor and wisdom of the country, that if they did not meet justice in one quarter they certainly should seek for it in another ; he was one who felt disposed to place reliance upon Parliament ; he looked with confidence to their decision ; he knew of no corrup-



tion in Parliament, and he firmly confided in its wisdom for the protection of their rights and privileges.

*Sir Hugh Inglis*, addressing himself to Mr. R. Grant, observed that he was sure to be excused for having allowed the two honorable proprietors to precede him. The latter gentleman had thrown so much light on the subject; his arguments had been so strong and convincing that he should be sorry to have prevented him<sup>t</sup> for one moment from delivering his sentiments. A feeling in which he thought his hon. friend (Mr. Grant) must participate.

*Mr. R. Grant*.—"Permit me to assure you, Sir, that you owed me no apology for what has conferred on me, in common with the rest of this audience, a very high gratification. I am extremely happy in having given place to both the gentlemen who have addressed you; to one of them I am particularly indebted for having most satisfactorily explained the circumstance alluded to in the Earl of Buckinghamshire's letter; and to the other, for having confirmed, both by the results of reason, and from the better warrant of experience, those arguments on which I have been accustomed to rely in the decision of this important question.—In obtruding myself on your notice for a short time, I rise chiefly for the



## DEBATE AT THE

use of making a few remarks, I was going to say on the only speech which occupied the attention of the last meeting, but which is certainly the only speech on that side of the question. It will cost me some effort to make those remarks, which, however, I shall deliver with all the respect due to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume). He was pleased, on a former occasion, to bestow on me some high and very undeserved compliments; but I should still less deserve those compliments, could I purchase his praise, or that of any other individual, by the sacrifice of private opinion.

I am happy, Sir, to reflect that notwithstanding some disapprobation which obtruded itself towards the end of the hon. gentleman's able speech, he was, on the whole, heard with the greatest attention. I, for one, congratulate myself on having heard that speech, to which I listened with the most cordial satisfaction,—and, what will scarcely be believed, even its prolixity, if I may be allowed the expression without offence, afforded me great pleasure.—It has been reported, out of doors, that the proprietors wished to stifle discussion, and were anxious to attain their object rather by the force of their wills than by the power of argument. I, therefore, in the name of the proprietors, thank



the honorable gentleman for having tried the experiment, how much of opposition, both in quantity and in quality, we could endure.—I feel much pleasure in looking to the spirit of the honorable proprietor, as it will tend to enlighten the public mind, by proving on which side candour and fairness are in reality to be found. I heard the professions made by the honorable gentleman of the utmost fairness and liberality, and I am disposed to give him full credit for the sincerity of his professions—but, at the same time, we all know, that when the mind is deeply imbued with a particular subject, it is somewhat difficult to maintain that standard of temper, by which, at the outset, we have determined to regulate our conduct. It is in the judgment of the country, on which side candour and fairness are to be found.

The hon. gentleman accused some members of having expressed strong feelings of indignation at the domineering language used by his Majesty's Ministers—But he cannot accuse any gentleman of having charged Ministers, as he charged the Directors, at the very moment, too, when they are throwing themselves on us for support in the arduous struggle which they have to sustain, with being influenced by a base and ignoble passion, for the patronage of the East-Indies. (*Hear ! hear !*)



He was also severe on another gentleman, for having imputed ignorance to the petitioners from the outports. I believe that ignorance *has* been shewn by them on a subject with which they necessarily could not be so well acquainted as the Company, but I have never heard any proprietor say, that the members for those outports, by a most scandalous dereliction of their duty, were sworn to vote for a particular measure, whether right or wrong. (*Hear ! hear !*)

The hon. gentleman went into a variety of voluminous details through which I will not follow him, not because I would check this species of discussion, but because there are many gentlemen in this assembly better qualified for examining his commercial statements than I am. I decline following him, however, not merely because I am incompetent to the task, but because I think I can shew, in a very few sentences, that the far greater number of the facts he has adduced, are either totally irrelevant, or totally inconclusive.—The hon. gentleman entered into a very long argument, to shew the advantage enjoyed by the Americans in their intercourse with India, and for half an hour he dilated upon this subject. Now, Sir, the advantage which they possess over us is admitted in the Resolution before the court; but the honorable gentleman did not say *one* syllable on the only point



which that resolution leaves open, whether the superiority of the Americans arises from their commercial energy, or their neutral immunity. (*Hear ! hear !*) As to the observations which he has made to prove that the loss of our commerce with the United States has been compensated by an increased trade to South America, it must be obvious to every mind, that though these arguments might be very appropriate, if we were discussing the merits of the Orders in Council, and the shutting-up of the trade with America, they are not quite so relevant when the question relates to the Company's Charter and the opening of the trade with India.

The hon. gentleman relying, as he expressed himself, entirely upon facts, has stated, that under the system of the Company a great increase had taken place in the trade to China, and this statement he has advanced with the view of shewing, if I understand him, that, under the system of the Company, the China trade cannot receive any increase whatever. He also enlarged considerably on the flourishing state of the indigo trade under the direction of the private merchants, aided by large loans from the Company; and the moral which he deduced was, that the indigo plantations never could have been brought to their present state of perfection by the Company, although his own statements most con-



vincingly shewed that they never could have been so improved *without* them. With a studious deprecation of individual examples, and a studious recommendation of average computations, the hon. gentleman favoured us with one or two isolated instances of adventure, on the part of private merchants, to and from India, and this, too, without stating the only point at all conclusive on the subject, namely, how these enterprizes succeeded. The hon. Chairman has informed us, that a part of the imports of the three last years are, at this hour, lying a dead weight in our warehouses. The hon. gentleman, though studiously throwing aside individual opinion, and declaring that he would found his statement on nothing but facts, laid, with respect to one part of his subject, the greatest stress on what he stated to be the opinion of Mr. Colebrook; which, after all, now turns out to be not the opinion of that gentleman, but of a person deeply interested in the private trade to India. With the same profession of studiously abstaining from opinion, with the same reverence for facts, he rested the whole weight of his argument respecting another essential point, I mean, the possibility of preventing illicit traffic, on the private opinion, delivered to himself in conversation, of an unnamed commissioner of the revenue. (*Hear! hear!*)



I could proceed with this sort of scattered remarks; I could make similar observations on many other parts of the hon. gentleman's speech, which I heard with the same degree of conviction as was produced by those to which I have alluded,—but I will decline the task, on this plain and simple ground, that, giving him all for which he asks, giving him all he contends for, the main question before us remains in all its untouched integrity. The question is not, whether the Americans trade more cheaply than the Company; still less, whether the Orders in Council proved injurious to the commerce of England; nor is it, whether we carry on the Indian trade at a loss (though I understand that not to be now the fact); but the question before us is: whether, admitting, for argument, that all these commercial evils, which the hon. gentleman has described, attach to the present system, are they not well worth incurring for the sake of avoiding those political mischiefs which form the single and the dreadful alternative? (*Hear ! Hear !*)

Now, Sir, if on this part of the subject, I wanted a *prima facie* argument of great weight, I would depend upon the account which the hon. gentleman himself gave of the political system of India. A description in colours so fervid that even I, an ardent admirer of that system, could



scarcely have dared to follow him. Had I left the room at the moment when the hon. gentleman concluded his panegyric, I should have been satisfied that he was warmly with the Court of Directors on this occasion. I should have thought that when a system had so completely answered all the ends for which it was intended, even the smallest apprehension, even the most distant surmise, of its danger, would have armed all hands in its defence; that all parties would be ready to guard such an institution, from moth and rust as well as from violence and plunder, from tarnish as well as from decay. (*Hear ! hear !*) I should have thought that a system of this nature would never be sacrificed, or in the slightest degree hazarded, for any commercial experiment whatever.

Protesting against the necessity of producing more than *prima facie* arguments on this subject, where those arguments have not been answered, I would yet cheerfully join issue with our opponents on the matter of fact. Reviewing the correspondence with His Majesty's ministers, what is the state of the argument? The Directors say, it is impossible for the Company to conduct its important political functions without the profits of the China trade, by which they are at present supported. Ministers admit this fact,



The Directors then assert, that, if the proposed regulation should produce a defalcation in that fund, the measure must be wrong; and this too is admitted by ministers. The directors next proceed to shew, that it must have that effect. The government give a vague denial, and ask for more discussion. With this the directors comply, and support their case by the most cogent reasoning, requesting that, if their reasoning is still to be set aside, it may at least have a more explicit answer. The reply of Ministers is, that we are at full liberty to hunt for an explicit answer in the Journals of the House of Commons. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Sir, there is a two-fold view of this question, which is very important. First, from the facilities of smuggling tea under the new system, the profit being no less than 95 per cent. on the sale-prices, and from the great opportunities afforded by the vast range of islands, termed the Eastern Archipelago, where tea can easily be procured, the great argument is, that the monopoly of the China trade will be shaken to its foundation, and, when that goes, all our establishments will go with it. Now, in this doctrine, have the directors gone on any new ground? have they advanced any thing hitherto unknown to mercantile men? why, Sir, Dr. Adam Smith, the great oracle of the advocates for the extension of



trade, but who, like other oracles, is not always understood by his own priests, has explicitly admitted, how difficult it is where strong temptation exists, how impossible in some cases, for any government to check illicit traffic. But I have a greater authority even than that of this great man; for great I certainly admit him to be, though considerably mistaken in all this business. I have the experience of the last few years.—Look to what has occurred during that time; you talk of “the seizure and confiscation of ships;” have even burning and death, been sufficient to stop illicit traffic, when the interests of men were powerfully stimulated by the hope of great eventual gain?

What were ministers called on to give us? They were called on to give us explanations as to those regulations; first, by which they intended to check the illicit importation of tea into this country, and into the other parts of Europe; secondly, by which they purposed to prevent the illicit shipment of the article in the Eastern seas. Have they done either? No,—they have given you two or three embargo measures, vague in the extreme, which do not effect the only points to which they ought to have been directed.—Regulations are vaguely proposed to check illicit traffic when the private traders come into particular ports in this country;



but what is to prevent them from running to innumerable points along the shores of Ireland and Scotland? But, besides, it is a most important consideration, that if the illicit shipment of the commodity may easily take place abroad, it is useless to talk of preventing it in this country, for those engaged in it will then find ways and means to surmount every difficulty. Now what have ministers said on this particular point? I cannot find in the Earl of Buckinghamshire's letter any thing on the subject, except an allusion to "the extension of the manifest act." What then is a manifest? As far as I understand the matter, it is a document stating the cargo and lading of a ship; to which document, however, it is essential that it shall be authenticated by the Custom-House established, or the British consul resident, at the port or ports where the shipment is made——Now the Eastern Archipelago contains a vast extent of coast; for it contains, I had almost said, a countless number of islands, some of which are larger than Great Britain itself. How many Custom-Houses are there? what British Consuls are established in those ports? An extension of the manifest act! Do Ministers intend to fringe the whole coasts of those islands with commercial stations and revenue Officers? If such a proposition were



made to them, its extravagance would occasion them to smile; but I say that they are guilty of infinitely greater extravagance, when, without any guards, without any securities of this kind, they are about to hazard the ruin of all these great establishments; when they would abandon the keys of this great trade to private adventurers, vainly flattering themselves that some unknown, yet-to-be-devised remedy, some scheme dropped from the clouds, some lucky thought of a future hour, will enable them to steel those adventurers against the powerful and combined influence of strong temptation and lavish opportunity.

As a last consolation, Ministers assure us that, if any defalcations should take place in the revenue, they are deeply interested in meeting them, and will afford every assistance to restore our dilapidated affairs. I believe them. I must think of any set of persons, honored with the royal confidence, who would not, in such a case, do their utmost to assist us heart and hand. But my belief is, that it will then be too late; and it is no answer to me to say, that they are sure to have the will to aid us, when my argument is, they are sure not to have the power. This is the result of their proposition; that they give us evils in the gross, and promise us remedies in detail. They suggest a measure where all



that is certain is bad, and all that is good is contingent.—(Hear! Hear!)

On this important part of the subject, I think the crude ideas I have thrown out, contain reasoning sufficient to influence my mind against agreeing with this proposition, until I hear on the side of Ministers, some clear and explicit regulations.—The great fear on the other point of this momentous question is, that the increase of the trade between the two countries, would also increase in a very great degree the number of private Europeans in India—an event ominous to the welfare and happiness of the natives, and eventually no less ominous to the peace and prosperity of the empire at large.

When this argument has been urged by the advocates of the Company, I cannot but express my surprise at the levity with which it has been treated.—It seems considered to be an argument devised in order to serve a turn, the mere child of the exigency of the moment.—But can our adversaries be so ignorant of history?—are they so ill-informed in the events of passed times as not to know that the grand legislative problem which, for half a century, the Company have been endeavouring to solve, has been, to adjust the balance of intercourse between the natives and the Europeans resident in India? To this point,



character? or where is such a slanderer less likely to be found than in the heart of this great metropolis?—a metropolis, of which may be said, and in a higher sense, what was once said concerning Tyre of old, “Her merchants are princes, and her traffickers the honorable of the earth”—Honorable, with better titles than those of rank;—princes, because, ennobling princely wealth by princely liberality.—(Hear! Hear!) I am convinced that the outports possess their full share of this valuable character; I am not, however, libelling that character, but the reverse, when I say, that the respected and respectable persons in question, are not a fair sample of the sort of traders who would go out to our possessions in the East, in the event of an open trade; still less, of those low agents and adventurers who might throng thither for purposes very different from those contemplated by the fair merchant. Am I not borne out in this statement by the history of India itself? Are there a more respectable class of men than the present body of private merchants residing under the Company’s Government?—and yet is there any thing more true, than that in the time of Lord Clive, persons holding the same situation, being less checked than now, far removed from public opinion at home, and exposed to the strongest temptations that can act on



human passion or infirmity, were guilty of the grossest oppressions towards the natives? There is another fact still more strong, and which still farther illustrates my argument. Can any thing be more certain than that many persons connected with the slave trade, in this country, were most unimpeachably humane, upright, and honorable? and, on the other hand, can any thing be more certain, than that the lower order of traders embarked in that traffic, were guilty of excesses, at which not only their principals at home, but at which human nature itself would have shuddered? (*Hear! Hear!*) I do not mean to say that I understand the secrets of that trade so well as some of our friends, the outports; but I do say, the history of that trade is a signal warning to all generations, a signal warning to us, that we should not, with these facts before our eyes, out of respect to the valued character of a British merchant, compliment away the ease and happiness of so many millions of our defenceless fellow creatures in a distant country.

These are not the points, however, touched on by His Majesty's Ministers. I say, *touched on*; because all their attempts at answers are mere tangents; glimpses, not views, of arguments. (*Hear! Hear!*) We are told by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, that our objection,



arising from the danger to be apprehended by the influx of Europeans to India, comes too late ; because the export trade which, as he seems to insinuate, we have conceded, will do all the mischief that we contemplate, and that we have therefore no right to make that apprehension a ground of objection to the allowance of a free import trade. Now, sir, it is rather more than I know that we *have* conceded the export trade. (*Hear !*)

If we have said little about it, the reason is, because it is of infinitely less importance than the other part of the question at issue. But mark their consistency. Ministers intimate, that we have conceded every thing by our supposed concession of the export trade ; yet they acquiesce in the assertions of the outports, who contend, that the mere concession of the export trade will not send out a single additional ship or man. Thus our having conceded every thing is made an argument for our yielding to a fresh application, although it is on the very nullity of that concession, that the fresh application is founded. (*Hear ! Hear !*)

The hon. proprietor used rather a different line of argument. He contended that the numbers who would go out to India must necessarily be bounded, because no man would proceed there, who was not actuated by the hope of



profit. Now, I confess, I must have been, in one continued dream, through his whole speech, if the effect of nine in ten of his arguments, I believe I might say, the tenor of nine in ten of his propositions, was not to prove, that the hopes of profit in this trade, could not be calculated; that they were, indeed, unbounded. If, therefore, I am to accept it on his authority, that the hope of profit would be the measure of the number who would proceed to India; and if I am also to accept it on his authority, that the hope of profit is unbounded; then I have his own authority for stating, that the number of persons who would go out would also be unbounded. (*Hear ! Hear !*)

The last reliance of the hon. gentleman was on the regulations of the local governments of India. On this subject I did intend to have made some observations. But the exhausting demand which I have made on the patience of the Court, renders it necessary that I should confine myself to one or two cardinal points. The hon. gentleman appears to have been guilty of a great mistake, in thinking, that because the balance of the Indian empire is perfect now, it would also be perfect after so essential an alteration had been made, as that which he recommends; though, according to his own idea, so considerable a change must be ef-



fected as would infallibly destroy the balance, by the accession of strength and numbers to one side. If, Sir, I even admitted the hon. gentleman's speculative argument, I would not allow his practical conclusion. I would not allow, because the government of India is a model of almost invulnerable excellence, that, therefore, we should put it to every stress and strain which it can possibly bear. From the merest tool of the lowest mechanic, to those great moral engines which are wielded by legislators and governments, it is the universal rule to spare that which is good as much as possible. I give the hon. gentleman credit for his wish to state every thing fairly, but, in point of fact, he has fallen into inaccuracies. When he called the attention of the Court to the police establishment of India, did he consider that the Indian empire is half as large as Europe? Did he recollect, that, within the range of the Company's dominions, there are two or three thousand miles of coast? And can he suppose that the *Chokees* placed in different and dispersed stations, throughout those immense territories, can effectually interfere to prevent the intercourse of individuals, when the motives that incite them shall be so excessively increased? I shall indeed deprecate the time, when our safety in that region, is owing to 150,000 troops, not above



20,000 of whom, according to the hon. gentleman's statement, are British subjects.

But instead of discussing at length this question, I will concede to the hon. gentleman all that he asks.—I will concede that what is now offered, and what may be done, will answer every purpose of averting the abuses to be apprehended from the free efflux of Europeans. I will concede that the private merchants, immoveably stationed at different points, will act with the utmost discretion and decorum. I will concede all this, and what follows? Why, you will be plunged in a new controversy, precisely like that, only somewhat worse, in which you are engaged at present. These adventurers will return to this country, and to Parliament, complaining, (probably with the greatest truth) that their speculations have failed. They will lay the blame of that failure on the still remaining restrictions, and will demand a further relaxation, on the abused ground of British liberty, and commercial right. You will again have the Ministers inviting you to frank and friendly discussion, only to close that discussion again, the moment that they find themselves out-argued — (*Applause*). Again, the adventurers will say to Ministers, "Give us this, for you have hitherto given us nothing;" and Ministers will turn round upon



us and say, "Give them this, for you have already given them all."

One remark of the honourable gentleman deserves particular notice—"Why," said he, "will you not permit these persons to try their hands at the open trade?" This argument I have been surprised to find advanced by persons possessed of great political knowledge; but they ought to consider what it is that they propose. Do they remember that it is a political experiment which they are about to make? Do they consider that they are about to act on a living subject? I should have thought that the disastrous history of Europe, for the last twenty years, had read us a sufficient lesson on the danger of such experiments. I should have thought that such doctrines had been swept away in the carnage which they themselves occasioned. There was a time, Sir, when revolutionary France was desirous of bestowing upon this country a better constitution than that under which we live; Why did you not permit her to try her hand for a short time?—(*Laughter, and Hear! hear!*) Why did you not let those monsters loose upon our shores for a few years, as a mere experiment, on condition that they should be muzzled again, if they devoured you too fast? (*Loud applause, and laughter.*) There is, at this moment, a being on the other side of the water,



who has presumed to intimate, that he could furnish you with a better system of government than that anomalous compound of *oligarchy* and *democracy*, which you are apt to fall down and worship. Why will you not consent to let him try the experiment for a few years? I pledge myself that you will find him perfectly willing to be taken on trial.—(*Applause.*) Or if you are determined to try the particular experiment under consideration, be content with that part of it which will affect the constitution of this country, and leave untouched the constitution of India. Confer on your ministers an amount of patronage equivalent to that of India. Try how your liberties will thrive under an arrangement, which shall consign to the Cabinet the command of nineteen out of twenty votes in Parliament. But do not involve the inhabitants of Hindostan in your speculation; do not make them partners in the hazard. Do not purchase your ruin with their's, when you may be ruined for nothing.—(*Laughter, and applause.*)

Sir, the honourable Gentleman has told us that he would recommend indemnity for all those persons in the employ of the Company, who might be affected by the change. I believe he would even have them pensioned for life. If this were the question before the Court, I should merely insinuate, that, while we have the assurance of the



hon. gentleman, that he would give this advice to Ministers, and I doubt it not, we have not even a hint from Ministers, that they will take the advice when given.—(*Applause.*) Nor should I greatly blame the unhappy persons, whose interests would be sacrificed, if, in the contemplation of a change so fearfully menacing their nearest interests, they were to ask for some more solid security than the good wishes, however fervent, of the hon. gentleman. My object, however, in adverting to this point, is somewhat different. It may perhaps be practicable to indemnify the individuals in the employ of the Company; but if the experiment before us should carry ruin to the heart of the Indo-British constitution, how, let me ask, will you indemnify the natives of Hindostan? With what provisions for *their* relief will you crowd your statute-book? What reparation will you find in your pension-list for the ruined homes and lost tranquillity of fifty or sixty millions of men? From what exchequer, from what financial fund, from what commercial gains, will you extract a remedy for the broken heart of an empire? I would not wish to conjure up imaginary terrors, or to shake in the eyes of ministers fancied alarms;—but I am sure I speak a language consonant with all that has been taught us by the



greatest masters of political wisdom, the deepest proficient in the history of man, when I say, that if the constitution of India *should* suffer the ruin which we apprehend, it will be easier for the British legislature to cover the whole face of that immense territory with their statutes of bounty and of indemnity, than to sow there again the seeds of that peace, order, social comfort, and political security, which will have been totally crushed and destroyed. (*Hear! hear!*) On these grounds I give my most sincere approbation to the solid and convincing arguments made use of by the Court of Directors. And, notwithstanding the ingenuity of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume), I hope that the Court of Proprietors will feel, and I doubt not they will, with an unanimity worthy the care and attention which they have bestowed on subjects of this nature, at former periods, and to which these walls can testify, the necessity of supporting their Directors, and of negating the amendment before them.”—[*This speech was received with the most animated applause.*]

Mr. Harris (of Reading) observed, that he felt it required no common share of hardihood for a stranger, like himself, to address this Court, and, more especially, after the very able and eloquent speech delivered by the hon. proprietor



(Mr. Grant) on the other side of the room. As he neither had nor could have any particular knowledge upon this subject, except what occurred from conversation and reading, he requested indulgence on the present occasion, as he had intended, though the hour was late at which the former debate had closed, to have offered a few observations on the speech of the hon. member on his right hand (Mr. Hume).

He should have said, that however ingenious his remarks, however elaborate his statements, they were not at all relevant to the question. He should have said, and he begged leave to say now, that these observations would have been much more applicable to a meeting of merchants at Liverpool or Bristol, than to one composed of proprietors of East-India stock—for if they were followed up, they would go to the entire abandonment of the trade of the Company. It *did* seem to him that the arguments went to give the whole trade to the private trader, because he (Mr. Hume) stated, that the trade to India at large had not been a gaining one to the Company.

In looking to the correspondence between the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, he was struck with the ability which was displayed by their own executive body, and he took a very different view of the letter from the



Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the 13th January, 1809, from that of the hon. gentleman; that letter was the key-stone on which the whole negociation turned. It appeared to him that the rights of the Company were there so clearly stated and explained, as to do away every ground of opposition. He could not agree that the Directors were only successful on the military part of the argument; their statements on the subject of commerce were as well founded as those which related to the military establishment. In looking at the subsequent correspondence, his opinion was still more strengthened. His sentiments were those of an honest individual, uninfluenced by any sordid motive, his immediate interests being so small, that if he did not consider this a question which involved the best rights of the country, as well as of the proprietors; he should not have stepped across Leadenhall Street to have attended the meeting. (*Hear! hear!*) But he thought that the interests of the Company and of the State had gone on so well together, and were so strongly connected, that they could not be divided without endangering the safety of both. At least the idea of such a separation ought not at this day to be entertained.

The letter to which he had alluded appeared to have produced its proper effect on the mind of the



Board of Control; for, from the reasoning in that letter, and the subsequent correspondence, Government at that time seemed to have arrived at this conclusion, or nearly so—that it was prudent and proper to confine the import exclusively to the port of London, although they expressed their opinion that the export trade ought to be extended to the outports. He was not surprised that this conclusion was come to by the late president of the Board of Control, because the wisdom of the father upon these points might be supposed to have descended upon the son. And he could have wished that that right hon. gentleman had continued in the office of president till these important points were settled, for, since the period of his having quitted that situation, it seemed that Ministers had been so assailed by applications from the outports, that they had seen reason to form a different and new opinion.

The Company had therefore arrived at a most important juncture, and it was absolutely necessary that a decision should be made, without delay, instead of protracting the discussion, as advised by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume). There is no time to lose; the Charter is nearly expiring, or, as a great city orator said at a meeting for a different purpose yesterday, “the lease is almost out.” With respect to the right which the Company had of



trading to India, it appeared to him from long established enjoyment they had, if not an absolute, at least what amounted to a moral right, to that privilege. It had been the custom to separate the political part of this question from the commercial: it had been said by the hon. gentleman, that it was better so to do, and that the trade to India might be permitted without endangering their political safety. He was of a different opinion, and could support himself by quotations from the greatest statesmen.—The hon. gentleman had fortified his opinions by the sentiments held by different merchants on the subject; and by the opinions of a gentleman in the Direction (Mr. *Bebb*), who was said to have made similar statements before the House of Commons. But if such were the fact, the hon. Director must have since found reason to change his mind, for he observed in one of the letters to the Board of Control, it was stated, that the approbation of the conduct of the Committee of Correspondence, in the late negotiation, was signed by *every individual Director*. (*Hear!*) Individual opinion was sometimes of great consequence, and he happened lately to converse with a foreigner of some distinction, an officer of rank at present on his parole; as he knew him to have been in India, it was natural for him to inquire his sentiments



on the question, and the following were his words:—"Sir, I have lived and served in India twenty years, I have seen the principal seats of the Company's commerce, and my opinion is this—that if your trade is opened to the outports, as is now sought, the India Company will be ruined."

After such an eloquent and able speech as that delivered by the hon. gentleman on the other side of the room: it would be taking up time unnecessarily, were he to go generally into the question, he should therefore add a very few observations. It was asked by the hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume) what had become of a considerable part of the profits of the China trade for a number of years past? He should be told that these profits, and much more than these, had been expended in East-India Conquests, not for the benefit of the Company, but for that of the Nation; not for the interests of the Proprietors, but for the aggrandizement of the Country. (*Hear!*) They were expended to dislodge from the Continent of India, and the Islands of the Eastern Seas, that man, who had been endeavouring to overturn all the existing establishments of Europe and of the world. Their valuable rights, therefore, although they were now proudly demanded by the merchants of the outports, should not be given up. They demanded, not a liberty to trade



to India, but to proceed to every part of our possessions, and to return to their various ports. They asked for this, not as a boon, which had been made the foundation of some of the petitions to the House of Commons; but they demanded it as a right, inseparable from the character of British merchants, who ought to be permitted freely to trade to every quarter of the globe. He feared he was trespassing on their time and patience, but it arose from his local situation, in consequence of which he had rarely attended the debates in that room. Another point

the trade to China had been laid out in procuring some important articles of commerce, with which, but for the intervention of the Company, England could not be supplied. He had documents on this subject, but would not trouble the Court with reading them, and he concluded by recommending a continuance of the system of wisdom and firmness by which the discussions with the Board of Control had been hitherto carried on. The support he could give the Company was very feeble, but even the support of an individual was sometimes important.

Mr. Impey stated, that, as a  
 India Company and to the system of Com-  
 which had been carried on with so much not to be  
 ness and success for the last thirty or forty years.



glad that the statement of the hon. Proprietor (Mr. *Hume*), however prolix, had been heard by the Court with so much patience and attention. Without any knowledge of the private history or connections of that gentleman, he was sure he could not be very far wrong, in considering his speech as the speech of the Earl of Buckinghamshire.

Mr. *Hume* spoke to order.—He never saw the Earl of Buckinghamshire in his life—he never heard from him. Therefore it was wrong to throw out such an insinuation.

Mr. *Impey* resumed, by begging the hon. proprietor's pardon; he meant not to give him offence. However, whether the speech delivered by him was that of Lord Buckinghamshire or not, was very immaterial;—certainly he stood up in the court as the advocate of that noble Lord—and his speeches were of such a stamp, as evidently bore his image and superscription.—(Hear! hear!) Mr. *Impey* continued by stating that the hon. gentleman mistook him, if he imagined that he intended to throw any slur upon him; far from it. The Earl of Buckinghamshire and the India Company were at the bar of the Court; that bar was at present the court of law, and it was right that the arguments should be patiently heard.—A.



great deal of praise was due to the hon. gentleman, for the mass of facts he had detailed, and the ingenuity with which he strove to apply them to the question;—he hoped that speech would be published and distributed among all those likely to take a part in the decision of this question; he was sure it would do more service to the interests of the India Company, than the best efforts of its most zealous advocates. For if that gentleman, with all his industry and talents, could find no better arguments for opening the trade to the exports, a demand with which, if the Company did not comply, the Government of India was threatened to be taken from their hands—if he could furnish no better arguments than those which he had advanced, which the cause of the Government was weak indeed;—he thought the Directors might go to Parliament firmly depending on the justice of their claims, the effect of that speech, and the reasoning which they adduced in their correspondence.—Of that speech which lasted upwards of three hours, not one thirtieth part indeed had applied to the subject, and while they might admit and rely on those statements in it, which had tended to prove the wisdom and ability of the Company's Government—he besought them not to be led away by the wanderings of that hon. gentle-



man from the real question before them. The question was not whether the trade should be open to the private merchants, (though that was a most important subject) to which the greater part of the facts adduced by the hon. gentleman applied, — that question having been given up in his opinion, by the Court of Directors last year. Neither was it whether the merchants and manufacturers should be allowed to carry their manufactures from the outports to India; for that also had been arranged; but the question was, first, whether the whole import trade from India, which for two hundred years had come exclusively to the port of London, should be permitted to every other part of the country:—and secondly, whether if they did not comply with this demand, the Government of India should be taken out of their hands; for that was the alternative held out by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, unless they agreed to the proposed measure.

The hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, had complained that the Court of Directors had advanced nothing but opinions, and in answer to them, he had brought forward an immense body of facts, to which he had but one objection—that they were not relevant to the question. But the honorable gentleman need look no further than the motto of Tristram Shandy, to find that it is not



facts but opinions which produce all the troubles of mankind. The Court of Directors did not argue with Government as to facts, but about opinions. — They say, if certain measures are pursued, we think they will produce ruin to the Company, and Government are of opinion they can provide some legislative acts (they do not tell us what) to prevent it. There is a difference on fundamental principles, and if all the commercial facts from the beginning of the world to this time were collected together, they cannot bear upon the question.

If the Court were called on, at this time, to decide on any less important subject, he perhaps should not have thought it necessary to request their attention. But from the papers before them, it appeared that their very existence was at stake — the citadel of their strength was besieged, and the garrison was called upon to surrender at discretion. (*Hear ! hear !*) The letter of the Directors was not, as the hon. gentleman called it, a defiance to Government, but a manly and fair statement of the Company's sentiments. The question was, whether they shall desert their Directors at this moment, or unite with one heart and one mind to support them through the struggle in which they are engaged ? We are told, that all which is dear to us is at stake ; the question is then, shall we give up all that is valuable to us, or make exer-



tions proportionate to the dangers with which we are threatened?

If it were at all necessary to rouse the feelings of the court of proprietors, the eloquence of the hon. gentleman (Mr. R. Grant,) who preceded him, would be perfectly sufficient. But he did not think it was necessary; every one must feel the crisis and be sensible that we were called upon to act in self-defence. All, he was sure, with one exception, were willing to coincide in the propriety of the Resolution: but it was important that they should be assisted to support it by the good wishes of an enlightened public, and that by the candid and explicit statement of their case, they should so influence the members of both Houses of Parliament, as to obtain a verdict in their favour. (*Hear! hear!*)

It was not every enemy of the East-India Company, who was so liberal as the hon. gentleman who has moved this amendment; it was not every enemy who would indulge in such panegyrics on that which he opposes—Was it possible for any man to stand up in this Court and pronounce such an eulogium on the Indian Government, without perceiving how weak and how wicked any Minister must be, who would endeavour to overthrow such an admirable system for mere speculative commercial advantages. There was an ancient apologue—

the conversation between the different members of



the body and the belly, which he thought suitable to the present subject. The enemies of the Company had stated that they remained in a state of apathy in Leadenhall-street, receiving the wealth which the East pours in upon them, and making no exertions for the general benefit ; this accusation was most unfounded. For if the matter be investigated, the East-India Company would be found disseminating her wealth abroad—encouraging the industry of the East, and extending thither the blessings of a beneficent Government. (*Hear! hear!*) Nor are the manufacturers at home less obliged to them, for if there is any manufacture which is suited to the East-Indies, they are in the habit of exporting it even at a loss. And, if, on the other hand, any articles of the East are considered fit for their use, they are carefully selected and imported for their benefit. The wealth of that great Company had been directed through various channels to the public good, and if the country had been able to make a stand against its united enemies, it was in a great degree owing to the support and assistance derived from that immense establishment. (*Hear! hear!*)

The question was two-fold, commercial and political; the commerce of the East, was certainly of great importance to this country, for it contributed between four and five millions annually



to the Exchequer. But if compared with the political part of the subject, it became a mere trifle. Politically considered, the question not only affected the happiness of our subjects in India, and the stability of our empire there; but the stability of the British Constitution, under which we have so long lived prosperous and happy.—In stating this question, the first proposition he should lay down, was almost considered as a political axiom, and supported by the greatest statesman of our time,—that it was impossible to transfer the government of India into the hands of His Majesty's Ministers, without a dangerous increase of the power of the Crown, and hazard to the balance of our own Constitution. This proposition was laid down by Mr. Pitt, in 1784, and on that doctrine he founded the system which has since been acted on for the benefit of both countries. So convinced was he of its advantages, that in 1793, after an experience of nine years, he renewed the Company's Charter for twenty years, on the same foundation. From this principle, he and those who acted with him, never swerved, and the late Lord Melville, at an advanced period of his political life, in a letter to the Directors, has recorded his opinion. That opinion has been read before, but it is so very important that I beg leave to read it again.



“ In the first place,” says his Lordship, “ I set out with disclaiming being a party to those opinions, which rest upon any general attack of the monopoly of the East-India Company, either as to the government or commerce of India. My sentiments, in that respect, remain exactly the same as they were when I moved the renewal of the Charter, in 1793 ; and, if any thing, I am still more confirmed in the principles I brought forward at that time. That a direct interference by government in the affairs of India is necessary for their stability and uniformity, I am more and more convinced ; but that the ostensible form of government, with all its consequent extent and detail of patronage, must remain as it now is, I am persuaded will never be called in question by any, but those who may be disposed to sacrifice the freedom and security of our Constitution, to their own personal aggrandizement and ill-directed ambition ; I remain equally satisfied, as to the propriety of continuing a monopoly of the trade in the hands of the East-India Company.”

Mr. *Impey* said, that on this part of the subject, the next proposition he should lay down, was, that it was impossible to take the government of India out of the Company's hands, without creating dissatisfaction among our European servants, and perhaps destroying the allegi-



ance of the natives altogether ; we must not forget, that the only legal title we had in India, was a grant from the Mogul, and though the power of the Mogul has long gone by, the natives still look to the name with reverence. On this ground the empire of India was formed ; on this ground the Company made wars and concluded treaties of peace. Now if the natives were informed that the Company were no longer their governors,—who is it can say what effect might be produced ? They did not understand, how should they ? the complicated nature of the government under which they live—and a transfer to new masters, might put an end to their allegiance.—A long series of benefits conferred, has the necessary effect of engaging the human heart,—acts of kindness must insensibly win upon the mind and powerfully stimulate it to a grateful return. And he knew from the best authority, that the servants of the Company, as well as the natives, cherished the name of the East-India Company as we did that of our Constitution, because it was the source of their protection and prosperity,—and who can tell the consequences which might result from overturning it ?

But though these were strong grounds for preserving the government of the Company, he should go even further ; he would main-



tain, that if they had not a strict legal right to the territory and government, they had the strongest equitable claim that ever was established. India was conquered, at their expense and risk, with the sanction of the authorities at home, and the natives had lived quietly under their government, which was admirably adapted to produce happiness, security and content. When he spoke of the conquest of India, he did not speak of facts which were long passed. Since the last renewal of the charter, the Company had expelled their ancient rivals and enemies, the French and Dutch. They have subdued their no less powerful opponents the Mahrattas and Mahomedans, and they had added to the British dominions the Cape of Good Hope, and the islands of Ceylon, Java, and Mauritius. All this had been done within the last twenty years. With respect to the second point, the good government of the Company in their territories, it was not denied; the hon. Proprietor himself (Mr. Hume) did not deny it; the most inveterate enemies of the Company had ceased to consider them as spoilers and oppressors. In 1793, Lord Melville declared, that under their sway, the Indian empire had attained a degree of happiness and prosperity which was never before known, and that if the British Provinces in the East, were compared with the neighbouring states



of the native princes, they appeared as a garden placed near the field of the sluggard. On these grounds they had established their right, and it was on a consideration of the just claims of the Company, that Mr. Pitt and his coadjutors had come to the conclusion which Lord Melville stated in Parliament, that through the Company the administration of the East ought to be carried on. Such was the unanimous declaration of Mr. Pitt's administration—Mr. Pitt and the men who acted with him, were great men, and their opinions had then, and still have, great weight with the public. To compare them with their puny successors, would be, indeed, comparing the greatest things with the smallest. It would be to compare *Ossa* with a *wart*.

Having stated their opinions, he should now advert to the opinions of his Majesty's present Ministers. The Earl of Buckinghamshire, in his Letter to the Court of Directors, says, "The expediency of adhering to that system, by which the Government of India has been administered through the intervention of the Company, is strongly felt by his Majesty's Government; but it must not be supposed that there are no limits to that expediency, or that there are no advantages which might result from a different course." Now he should be extremely



sorry to say any thing personally offensive of any Gentleman; but speaking of this production, as coming from a Minister, he must say that it appeared to him to be confused, contradictory, and unintelligible. It set out, in the first place, with a recognition of the principles of Mr. Pitt. “The *expediency* of adhering to that system, by which the Government of India has been administered through the intervention of the Company, is strongly felt by his Majesty’s Government.” So it was felt by Mr. Pitt. Now what succeeds? “But it must not be supposed that there are no limits to that expediency.” This certainly appeared to him totally unintelligible; for, if it be true, that it is *expedient* the Company should still possess the Government, then the argument was in their favour; for it was to be presumed, that it would not be expedient to continue a Government, unless it produced the greatest practicable portion of happiness. I know not what his Lordship means, then, when he speaks of limits to this expediency, unless he means that the present Government is not an absolute model of perfection; and that a system could be set up, which might have some advantages which the present does not possess. And, from the last part of the paragraph, this seems to be his meaning—“or that there are no advantages which might result from a different course.” But this appeared absurd in reasoning. For if it



were true, that the greatest quantity of happiness was produced by the Government as it now was established, then any other system could give only a *minus* quantity. It was setting up minor advantages, for the purpose of destroying others of the utmost magnitude.

But he should not rest on the absurdity of this paper. If it were true, that Ministers had devised any plan for the Government of India, capable of creating a greater quantity of happiness than the present system, let them produce it. Though we are Proprietors of East India stock, we are also Englishmen. What are our dividends, when weighed against the happiness of millions? If, then, such a plan be in existence, let them submit it to us, and we shall adopt it. But if, on the other hand, the present system has established the happiness of the natives of India, the security of our empire there, and the balance of the Constitution at home, let us not be sacrificed to the petty profits and doubtful speculations of private adventurers. Let not the East India Company be torn to pieces, and its limbs be sent to the out-ports as a *bonus* for the loss of American commerce, or the destruction of the Slave Trade.—  
(*Hear ! hear !*) Let them look in other channels for remuneration, not to the destruction of the East-India Company.



But what were the reasons, what were the facts, which had been stated in support of this demand? Had Ministers been convinced that a larger import or export would take place? On what foundation did they rest their defence? The East India Company were totally ignorant on all these points. When these necessary questions are asked by the Directors, Ministers tell them that they are not bound to give any reason for their opinion, and that the Company must be satisfied with their decision. But if they were to be destroyed, it was but justice to demand, like the hero of old, to be destroyed in the light. Let us know who our enemies are. Let us behold the weapons by which we are destined to fall.—(*Hear ! hear !*)

This he would assert, that if the Company were to remain in the exercise of the Government of India, the means to carry it on ought also to be vested in them. When Mr. Pitt first introduced the present system of Indian Government, he saw that he must put into their hands the instruments of Government, the sword and the purse; he gave them the military force, and the revenues. He also saw that they could not send that revenue to England except through the medium of commerce, and he therefore gave them what has been called the *regulated monopoly* of the Indian and China trade. In that



letter from which he had just read an extract, the opinion of Mr. Pitt, as well as of Lord Melville, on this subject, was very clearly stated; and, it was almost unnecessary to add, was in direct opposition to the alteration now proposed. The present Ministers had professed to adhere to the principles of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, but in the course of this negociation they had, step by step, departed from it, until they had at length come to a proposition diametrically opposite. First of all, the Company were called upon to surrender the trade to India by throwing it open. On this point the Directors entered into long arguments, but as in the course of the negotiation the demand was given up, he should say nothing more about it. The next demand was, that the exports should go from the outports as well as from London. The Directors also state the danger of this, but being desirous to come to any terms not absolutely ruinous to the Company, they conceded this; and finally comes the proposition to extend the *import* trade to all the *outports*. On this subject the Directors have deliberated. They had stated to government that it was impossible to carry the measure into effect without ruin to the East-India Company.—The answer of His Majesty's Minister was, that “it remains to be seen whether some other mode cannot be devised for the government of India.” Would the hon.



proprietor justify this? would the hon. proprietor tell us, that the Court of Directors were incompetent to decide accurately on the subject. They were men of great sagacity and information—men who had spent all their lives in the service of the Company, and what was more, a great part of it, in the administration of its government. Could he say that such gentlemen as these were not fit to form a correct opinion, or could he point out any persons whose knowledge of the subject was more extensive? The hon. gentleman tells us that the China trade enables us to pay our dividends, but the Directors have clearly shewn that if the India trade goes to the outports, to the extent demanded, it will be impossible to prevent the increase of the illicit trade, by which our commerce with China will be so deeply affected, as to cut off the resources for the payment of our dividends, and consequently to overturn the Company. On the subject of the illicit trade, what has the hon. gent. said? His opinion, it seemed, was founded on the statement of a Commissioner of Customs; and that opinion was drawn from what appears to him a very strange principle. The Commissioner said, “more smuggling occurred in the River Thames than at any other port.” And why? Did not the India and China trade come into the Thames? but when they were taken away, the



smuggling must go with them. Now if the revenue boards could not prevent this illicit traffic with the trade under their very eyes, how could it be obviated when the trade should have been extended to all the ports of the kingdom, and all the islands of the Indian Archipelago?—(*Hear ! Hear !*)

In such a posture of affairs, we must range ourselves under the banners of the Directors. There was an obstacle in our way on which we must fall down, if we did not overleap it.—Let us then look the danger boldly and manfully in the face, and we should overcome it. The Company must know the danger which threatens it : their opponent is mighty, —that opponent was the Government ; strong, as it was necessary it should be, to perform its functions, in power and influence. But when he considered that this was not only the cause of the Company but of the whole Empire,—when he saw the great merchants of London pressing forward with petitions in their favour, immense as were their difficulties, he did not despair.—In 1784, the rights of the Company were attacked by a Minister, great in power, great in eloquence ; backed by a majority of two to one in the House of Commons ; and supported by the first families in the kingdom,—but they were united and ardent in their



defence, and he was defeated.—The East-India Company proudly stood their ground—but the Minister fell—a memorable example of the fate which ought to attend that *premier*, who would invade the rights of others for his own private and ambitious purposes.—(*Hear ! Hear !*)

On this great occasion, they ought to follow the principle pursued by their predecessors ; they ought to go before Parliament ; they should remind them, to use the striking and appropriate metaphor of Lord Melville, that the East-India Company was the great wheel which moved the commerce of this country, and they ought to call on the Government not to divert the stream which turns that wheel.—(*Hear !*) We should point out the immensity of our transactions—all beneficial to the country. We should say, last year our exports amounted to near £2,000,000—our imports extended to three millions and a half—we paid into the Exchequer between four and five millions. Our navy comprises 100,000 tons of shipping,—we employ 14,000 seamen,—and in this great city 30,000 souls are dependant on us for their daily labour and subsistence.—(*Hear ! Hear !*) When the Ministers see the East-India Company in all its magnitude and extent, they must hesitate before they determine on hazarding an experiment, from which evils the most alarming, in every possible point of view, must cer-



tainly flow;—they must pause, before they give their sanction to a measure, which only promised a contingent good, but would probably terminate in the destruction of the Company.

Entertaining the views he did on this subject, political and commercial, he was called upon to express his most decided dissent from the amendment which had been proposed. As to the resolutions, he thought they ran too much into detail.—It would be for the advantage of the East India Company if the principles contained in them could be stated in a few distinct propositions, fit for general distribution amongst the public, by which they could, at a glance, form their opinion. The great object was, however, *unanimity*;—no division should appear amongst us;—we should be firm, moderate, and, above all things, united in our defence.—Therefore, if any great number of Proprietors conceive that these resolutions ought to be adopted by the Court, he, for one, should not oppose them.

*Mr. Horace Twiss* hoped, that though in common with a gentleman (*Mr. Harris*) who had recently addressed them, he had not the honor to be generally known in that Court, yet the propositions contained in the amendment before them would, in some degree, justify him in obtruding himself on their notice.



Opening, as he should, those propositions, he might be supposed to be bearing hard on the individual who spoke singly in support of them, and to whom so many hon. proprietors had already replied; but he could not help thinking that the hon. gentleman had made up in prolixity what he wanted in numbers. He believed that there had been no engine of misrepresentation, so frequently and so successfully used by the enemies of the Company, as the unfortunate word "monopoly;" they knew the word was unpopular, and attached unpopularity to every thing to which it was applied, and therefore they had had recourse to it. "We will," say they, "call the charter of the East-India Company a monopoly—and so we shall make the charter unpopular, and the Company unpopular, and every thing unpopular, except what is favourable to our own interests." This was all very ingenious, it possessed every merit which could belong to such a contrivance, except that little old-fashioned virtue, *truth*, and of this it did not contain one particle. And yet they were called on, in consequence of that accusation, to sacrifice the rights and subsistence of individuals, the strength and supply of the state, the labours of centuries which were past, and the hopes of ages that are to come. What were the



plain and simple facts, well known to this Court, and which ought to be known by the public, who appear to be ignorant of them? They were these: that for twenty years the monopoly had been given up, and shipping had been provided (even more than had been called for) to enable the private merchants to carry on a trade with territories conquered by the Company's arms, maintained at their expense, and preserved by their wisdom. (*Hear!*) It was for the private merchants they had been doing all this, who now accused them of being monopolists. (*Hear!*) If they were monopolists, they were so only in the *expense*,—and whatever avidity the private merchant might shew to participate in other things, he seemed to have no idea of interfering with the Company's monopoly in that. (*Hear!*)

He would not take up much of their time in proving the positive folly of drawing a comparison between the increase of trade, which occurred after the falling off in our intercourse with America, and the sort of increase expected from the proposed alteration.—Though it might be argued that the course of trade would change, and that a new and advantageous commerce might be opened, between



states whose language, manners, customs, and religion were analogous—yet this probability ceased when they went to a country with which they had nothing in common, nay, whose climate, habits, and propensities were totally different. Was it supposed that the private merchants, by sending out a supply of goods, could at once create a demand for them? Did they suppose that they could in an instant effect what the East-India Company, with long experience, immense capital, and magnificent establishments, had been unable to execute? Did they believe, that they had only to visit the Æthiopian, and bid him change his skin? (*Applause.*) But it was contended that the facilities to the private trader were not arranged in such a way as that he could make full use of them. It was contended that the East-India Company had been in the habit of arbitrarily altering and raising the price of freight to the private traders—he believed that those who used this argument had not looked into the acts of Parliament which had been passed on this subject since the last renewal of the charter. In truth, the thing never had been done, and could not be done by the Company; for it was expressly provided in the act of Parliament, that they should not raise the price of freight with-



out the opinion of the Board of Control; and even when the latter had given their consent, the Court of Directors were compelled to meet, from time to time, and report on the existence or non-existence of those circumstances in consequence of which the rise was permitted. Surely no person would say, after a perusal of the papers laid before the Court, that there was any collusion between the Directors and the Board of Control. (*Applause.*) But when their opponents were driven from the ground of fact, they say, "let us take up the question on a broad and extensive basis!—Here are persons making a large profit by commercial intercourse with an immense country, from which we are almost excluded—they are mere tenants of a farm,—their lease is almost out,—and we ought now to participate in the benefits so long enjoyed by them!" Allowing this to be the fact, what did it amount to? Let them be considered tenants of the farm, and what was the answer?—they had been a long time expending their money in the improvement of that farm,—they had laboured to cultivate it,—they have succeeded in rendering it fertile,—and now they wanted a renewal of their lease, that they might gather in the produce of their capital and their labour. It was admitted that



they had improved the land; and was it just or equitable, that when they expressed a wish to derive the advantage of their industry, Ministers should turn round and say, "No! it shall be given to others; others shall reap what you alone have taken the pains to sow!" (*Hear! hear!*) The honorable Gentleman who moved the amendment, allowed that so far from there being any cause of complaint against the Government of the Company, it had been managed as well as it possibly could; even better, said that honorable Gentleman, in his warm panegyric, than the Government at home. Was it then to be imagined, that the private traders would be able to carry on that system *better*, which was at present supported as well as it was possible for any system to be? Or, were we not rather to fear, that if the trade were thrown open in the mode intended, the Indian empire would not be able to sustain itself against the ambitious schemes of speculators and adventurers.

The honorable Gentleman who spoke last observed, that the export trade no longer formed a part of the question, as it had already been given up. He could not agree in this sentiment, for the Court of Directors had not given up that ground, on which they originally relied. They



abandoned it, not positively and unconditionally, but with certain stipulations and conditions—  
 “We will,” said they, “give up this to you, if you agree to certain material points.” Now, if this stipulation was not fulfilled, he maintained that they had a right to resume their original position, whenever they pleased. This justified him in the view he had already taken; but in the few further remarks which he should offer on it, he should confine himself to the propriety of restricting the trade to the port of London alone. Was it, then, a question between London and the outports merely? No, it was a question between the East India Company and the fair merchant, whomsoever and wheresoever, and the dealers in contraband traffic, throughout the country. This, however it might be disguised or evaded, was the true question. (*Hear !*) There was no person who had read the documents but would perceive that some extension must take place, though not so great as the advocates for a free trade might hope. But supposing the trade to be extended in the degree demanded, by whom would the benefit be enjoyed? Not by the East India Company; not by the fair trader; but by a gang of smugglers. (*Applause.*) The smugglers would virtually possess that very



monopoly, which, in the hands of the East-India Company, has created so much noise and clamour. If the propriety of continuing the trade to the Company were to be defended only on the facility of smuggling tea, which the proposed alteration must afford, that ground alone, he thought, would be sufficient to decide the question. An honorable Gentleman (whom but for his slight acquaintance with him he should be happy to call his friend) had plainly shewn, that all regulations for the prevention of an illicit traffic were futile and fallacious—and he alludes eloquently to the measures taken by our enemy on the Continent—"who," says he, "found that neither confiscation, burning, nor death, could subdue the exertions of the enterprising, when stimulated by the hope of gain." But, he might have stated a circumstance, which comes a little more near to their business and their bosoms: he might have stated that though the government of this country had tried every means in their power to prevent the exportation of bullion, at a profit of only *one half* per cent., yet they had been utterly unable to keep the specie in the country. Now, if a profit of one half per cent. induced men to send our bullion to the Continent, what would be the effect, where the profit was



95 per cent. as it was on teas smuggled? It might be said that the private trader would not be permitted to go out to China; but it must be recollected that at Java, and other islands in the East-Indies, tea may very readily be procured; and though not so cheap, it is true, as at the fountain head, yet the greatness of the profit would amply repay the adventurer for the difference. It should also be recollected, that the Americans, who were not bound by any laws, and who had no qualms of conscience on the subject, would not scruple to supply the illicit dealer when they could make a certain profit by it. (*Hear ! hear !*)

An hon. gentleman (Mr. Impey) had said, "we are now attacked in the citadel of our strength:" he liked the metaphor and he would pursue it farther. Suppose the governor of a town besieged, for a long time kept only one gate open, for his communication with the surrounding country; what would be thought of him, if he suddenly gave orders to unbar all the gates, North and South, East and West, and assigned as his excuse for so doing, that he meant to double his guards; thus creating a danger, for the pleasure of opposing it? He did not like this double-faced policy; he did not like to give away



absolute safety for the sake of trying more cumbersome expenses and heavier establishments, which, after all, could not elude the mischief. It would be as feasible to cry down vice by proclamation, or to prohibit disease by act of parliament, as, by mere positive regulations, to hope for the prevention of illicit traffic. He must be more than a Hercules, who could bind the fleeting streams of that golden current. And, however small his own information might be upon the subject, of this he was convinced, that if the Directors, who were the most competent judges, believed that these demands would really be of service to the country at large, they, and the Court of Proprietors, would be the first to adopt the plan, by acceding to the wishes of the petitioners. For, he was sure, they had been always ready to settle, fairly and candidly, the claims of every person opposed to them by a concession of every thing short of their duty as British subjects. He wished he could see the same liberality on the part of their oppositors; but they appeared to be admirers of patriotism rather in others than in themselves. They did not seem to value that patriotism which was present, and by which, therefore, nothing was to be gained; but they adhere to



that which depends on the future, by which no loss could be sustained to themselves, and which might probably put something in their pockets.

*(Hear ! hear !)*

On the third point, the danger which was to be apprehended from the influx of adventurers to India, he should say little ; for the papers before the Court had so decidedly and explicitly pointed out the mischief, as to leave no room for doubt. He was for preserving the rights and privileges of the East-India Company : but he was for defending them temperately as well as firmly : he was not willing to throw defiance in the teeth of His Majesty's Government. He only desired that they should stand proudly and manifestly in the right ; and he thought it would be best to confine themselves to the immediate commercial question, without expatiating on any supposed designs of a political nature. Thus much, however, he could not but say, that if any farther innovation was intended, the present was a most inauspicious period for its introduction. When an operation was about to be performed on the natural body, what was the course of the skilful anatomist ? Was it not, in the first place, to remove inflammation, and



to reduce the nerves to a state of repose and quiet? And what was the time selected for this perilous experiment on the body politic? When the public mind was inflamed: when we were pressed by enemies abroad, and appalled by distresses at home: when all was doubt, and difficulty, and danger, and irritation; but most particularly amongst those merchants who were now clamouring for a participation in the commerce of the East. He would not comment any further on their conduct; but, unless His Majesty's Ministers, or their advocates, should adduce stronger reasons than he had yet heard from them, he would maintain that these invasions, subversive of the Company's rights, would also be hurtful to the power of England, and detrimental to the safety, honour, and prosperity of the whole commercial world. The amendment had, of course, his most decided negative. (*Great applause.*)

Mr. *Plomer* said, he should have addressed them in the early part of the debate, had he not felt a consciousness of incapacity; but, on a subject of so much importance, even the smallest information might be serviceable, and, therefore, he hoped the Court would indulge him in making a few observations. The cause of the Company had for its basis, justice and policy, and in supporting that cause, he could not sufficiently admire



the candour and conciliatory disposition which had been displayed by the Court of Directors. If the question were to be decided by the good sense of the Empire at large, or by the weight of argument, he had no doubt what that decision would be. They had read the correspondence, and he felt that every point of reasoning advanced by the Court of Directors, had its foundation in truth and equity. If he understood rightly the nature of a Charter, it was an agreement between two parties, to do that which they could not perform alone. This applied not only to the East-India Company, but to the Bank of England, and other chartered bodies, where certain stipulations, founded in the wisdom as well as in the necessity of the case, were agreed to be performed by the respective parties. The East-India commerce was first attempted to be carried on by Individuals in this country; but though acting under the title of a body, they could not succeed, and that which is termed "a monopoly," but the propriety of which term he denied, was obliged to be conferred upon them. It would be found that our great commercial enemies, the French and Dutch, acted in the same manner. By them also, individual exertion was first employed in the India trade; but like us, they were compelled to alter the system, and to establish



Companies. What did the British East-India Company stipulate to do ? They stipulated that the trade should be carried on, as beneficially as possible, for the state and for the community : and the government said, “ so long as this stipulation is fulfilled, so long shall we renew your Charter.” They all knew how far the Company had performed its agreement ; and they should look to the state of its commerce. That which in its origin was a small brook, scarcely bubbling above the surface of the ground, was now a mighty river, fertilizing, ornamenting and increasing the strength of the Empire. And when they looked towards those who were Merchants, they would behold in them the sovereigns of India. In short, in all possible points of view, the just claims of the Company had been extended and enlarged from year to year. In process of time, the present excellent government of India was formed,—It had

“ Grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength ;”<sup>\*</sup>

and so connected was it with the interests of the people, that if they were to destroy it, they would also destroy the country. From Merchants they were obliged to become Governors ; and those who were at first the framers of their Charter, were at length compelled to become sharers in the



venture. If, therefore, the system was the work of prudence and wisdom, it was not only needless but mischievous, at such a period as this, to alter it.

He should now advert to a point which had not been so much touched on as it deserved. In the addresses from Birmingham and other places, the petitioners declared, "that their object is not merely to take a share of the Indian trade, but that they intend to settle and colonize in the East;" and they stated, that "they can see no danger from the most extensive colonization in India." Every one knew the danger in former periods, when the facility of proceeding to that country was not so great as it was now. Every one knew, that at that time it was very difficult to exclude French agents; if, therefore, with all those precautions, of which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) had spoken so highly, it was found impossible to prevent French emissaries from entering those countries; how were they to be guarded against, when every precaution should be laid aside? All knew with what an evil eye the French had long looked on our Indian trade; all knew, that they considered it as one of the main props of the British Empire; and that to wrest it from us, they invaded Egypt, which they contemplated as the key of our eastern dominions.



No doubt it would be said, "every care will be taken to exclude improper characters, —you may for instance, have an exact description of every person who goes out to India." This was very true; but how were they to know, that he who was going out, under the designation of a seaman or an agent, might not be an enemy's emissary? As to the increase of their exports to the East, he was far from believing any such effect would be produced. All knew that a considerable proportion of tonnage was now appropriated to the use of the private-trader, (which was not taken up), and, even if more were wanted, it would be provided. But the fact was, from the customs and manners of the inhabitants of India, it was morally impossible, they should consume more than they at present did.

How far the fiscal regulations could be extended to the outports, to prevent smuggling, was a very serious question. The hon. gentleman who preceded him had stated, that a profit of *one-half* per cent. was sufficient to allure persons, (though with the rope about their neck), to export the bullion from the country; and, had they not a right to infer, that the profit on Tea, which was infinitely greater, would encourage a most extensive illicit traffic? But it seemed, the commissioners of excise and customs had given



their opinion, that all this contraband trade would be prevented ;—he should be glad to know how ? It would be as difficult to prevent smuggling, or to collect the duties on Tea, as they were at present collected, if the import trade was thrown open, as to remove all the Company's warehouses, from the City of London to Liverpool or Glasgow.

In speaking of the danger which this increased intercourse with India might occasion, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) exclaimed—"What! are you afraid of a few straggling raggamuffins?" He would not so designate the hon. gentleman's friends,—but, as they were so termed by their advocate and supporter, he was willing to admit the correctness of the term, as one of the few facts stated by the hon. gentleman—and own, that he *was* afraid, not of the raggamuffins, but of the mischief they might produce to the fair trader; of the injury they might do to the just and honorable dealer. (*Laughter*) If the persons making these demands were really respectable, and possessed a great deal of information on the subject, he should have applauded ministers for attending to them; but they were not told who they were, nor were they acquainted with the arguments made use of by them. Instead of that, His Majesty's ministers say,—“Do you concede all the points under dis-



cussion; and then we will give you the reasons which render them necessary." He should be sorry that they took up this question on any but national grounds,—he desired them not to argue it, as members of that Court, but as members of the British Empire. Much had been said on the subject of the trade between America and India, and the former country was spoken of as deriving great advantages from it. An account, however, which he had seen, within the last two days, disproved this assertion. He had been told, by gentlemen conversant with the subject, that the trade was by no means useful to the Americans. Indeed, one fact had come to his knowledge, which supported this statement. A person took in a cargo of Tea, &c. at China, with which he proceeded to America, from thence to Europe, and back to America again, without being able to dispose of it, the market for many of the commodities, (cassia buds, sago, and various others,) being extremely precarious. The person from whom he received this information, told him, that the only chance the Americans had of making the trade answer, was by combining two or three voyages—Thus they would proceed to the Cape of Good Hope, and a variety of other places, on their way to India. Now, if the American merchant found it necessary to take this circuitous route, to make a



trifling profit, how would it fare with our own merchants, who are debarred, by the navigation laws, from such complex voyages?

He thought the manliness and wisdom of the Court of Directors deserved every praise—and that Court was bound to support them.—This could be done most effectually, in his opinion, by coming to an express resolution, combining perspicuity with brevity.—To the resolutions which had been proposed, he had only one objection, that they went too much into detail—at the same time that he perfectly approved of the spirit in which they were drawn up. But he hoped, before the discussion was closed, that some shorter resolutions, equally to the point, would be submitted to the Court; if not, the present should have his assent.

*Mr. Randle Jackson* said, that he had waited anxiously in the hope of some gentleman, on the other side, being disposed to follow the hon. proprietor who opened the debate, in order that he might, to the best of his power, have met any objections which could be urged against the Resolutions. He had been rewarded for his patience, by the ability which had been displayed in the discussion. They were told that their commonwealth was in danger; and he believed it, from the talents which had been called forth;



for it was a fact supported by all history, that, in times of peril, great abilities, which lay dormant till that period, began to develope themselves; and, till the hour of danger, the State was not acquainted with the intellectual riches which it possessed.—The question, before the Court, arose from a letter which had been received from the Earl of Buckinghamshire; in that letter they had been most flatteringly considered—the opinion of the General Court being there called for. The noble Lord had treated the proprietors, as persons worthy of being consulted; as persons whose decision would and ought to have weight.—Against him the same complaint could not be made, which had been alleged against other Governments—he had not entered on this negotiation, as if there were but two parties, the Ministers and the Court of Directors. However they might differ from him on other points, they must agree that he had acted with great propriety on this. He had called upon them for their opinions, and he hoped they would be as respectfully and candidly conveyed to him, as they had been fairly and directly required from them.

They were there met to decide on a most *dreadful alternative*; for so it undoubtedly must be considered. It was demanded of them either to consent to the imports from India being



brought to the outports of this country—or else what?—(Government could not be charged with having concealed or blinked the question)—some other means must be found of governing India, without the intervention of the Company. They were called on to consent to this proposition, naked as it was:—they were called on to consent to it, in the abstract, with all its dangers about it. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) had indeed stepped in, and promised *indemnity*; but they must recollect, that “*he is not the administration.*”

He could only look to what was contained in the letter of the noble Lord, and he there found no such word as indemnity. The alternative was there explicitly stated,—“you must, by a certain day, agree to the naked, abstract proposition, that you will give up the import trade of the country, or India shall be governed by others.” This must prove to the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, that they were brought to the point—the *aye* or the *no*,—there was no middle course. They must either concede that which was demanded, or manfully and firmly oppose it. He was therefore prepared to defend the Resolutions, in opposition to the sentiments delivered by the hon. gentleman; Resolutions, which, though they had not been expatiated



upon by the hon. mover, yet displayed the genius of the inborn mind, which shines through the modesty and diffidence with which they were proposed—and every person who attended to them, must acknowledge, that the man by whom they were proposed, must be a gentleman of no ordinary information and ability.—(*Hear! hear!*) An hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) rose very soon after those resolutions were proposed, and, in a speech of considerable length, of which he remained an untired, though an unimproved auditor, he had advocated the cause of the outports. Much of that speech consisted of detailed numerical statements, to which he thought a distinct reply should be given.—Allowing all due homage to the transcendant talents which had preceded him, and which had completely succeeded in combating the general question, yet, he conceived, that if they did not overturn the numerical details of the hon. gentleman, he would depart the Court with “vantage ground,” which he should be sorry to permit.—How much more unpleasant then, was his task, than that of the hon. gentleman who had already addressed the Court, on the same side of the question, in performing this duty, on which their salvation depended, and how much stronger was his claim to their indulgence.

An hon. gentleman (Mr. Harris) had said,



that the speech of the hon. proprietor (Mr. Hume) was rather calculated for a meeting of Liverpool or Bristol merchants, than for the medium of the East-India House. He did not concur in this opinion—he did not desire to take any advantage of his situation, but to argue the question fairly and broadly. He was glad that it was unnecessary for him to make any declaration of his own feelings—all that affection could inspire—all that loyalty could utter—of veneration and respect for the East-India Company—had been already expressed, much better than he could have done it, by those who had gone before him. He felt himself *particularly* solicitous in his endeavour to answer the objections of the hon. gentleman—whether they were the objections of the Earl of Buckinghamshire he did not know; but he was sure, if the noble Lord had displayed as much judgement in his negociation with the Directors, as he had evinced taste and discernment in the selection of his advocate—(if his advocate was indeed of his selection)—it would perhaps have been better for the interests of the Company. (*Hear! hear!*)

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) said, he disapproved of the Resolutions, as being matters of opinion, and not founded and bottomed on facts—and he brought forward a vast body of state-



ments and details in opposition to them. He could not but admire the art with which he commenced his speech, by defending Lord Buckinghamshire from the imputation of arrogance, which had been thrown out on a former day ; thus ingeniously winning over to his side, at the very outset, all those, who, from public or private motives, in a court like that, were likely to be attached to the present administration,—by standing forth as the avowed defender of their characters from terms of disrespect.

The letter of the noble Earl he must consider as the joint work of him and his colleagues ; but as, in the House of Commons, all attacks were directed against the Minister, though they in fact bore upon the whole Government ; so, in this Court, much would be pointed at the noble Lord, so often alluded to, as the President of the Board of Control, which more properly applied to the entire body of the Ministry. But in speaking of his Lordship, they must not forget that he was for a long time their faithful servant.—He doubted not that he still felt great affection for the Company ; but, in the discharge of his public duty, had laid aside all private feelings, from the most conscientious motives. But they were bound to meet, and openly vanquish his objections and his measures ; for, if they could not do it openly,



their case was not a strong one. With one exception, therefore, he considered the letter of Lord Buckinghamshire, as that of the administration; he said, with one exception, for he thought it was impossible that Lord Melville could concur in such an arrangement, after the sentiments which he had already expressed. He could scarcely believe that he would consent to remain a member of a cabinet, which could support measures so completely different from those which he recommended. He did not know that youthful Peer, but if he had that honor, he would beseech him to pursue the principles of his father, and to prefer, before all other advantages, in public or in private, an undeviating consistency of character.—(*Hear ! Hear !*) If he had the honor of being acquainted with the son, as he had known and admired the father, he would say, “instead of abandoning those measures which you have approved, act on the principle of those great men, who have sacrificed every hope of power or aggrandisement, to consistency.” He would remind him of those great living characters, the Wellesleys and the Cannings, whose names did not sound less harmoniously in the ears of Englishmen, because they left a cabinet in which they could no longer act



consistently with their known opinions.—(*Hear! Hear!*)

The resolutions, he admitted, were those of opinion; but they were less the opinions of the hon. mover, than of those celebrated statesmen. Those sentiments were embodied in them; and he must observe, that, had he drawn them up, he would not have said, that such and such were the sentiments of those statesmen, but he would have quoted their own words; that the public, who revered them, should recognize the language of those whose sentiments had always been received with the utmost deference and attention. The Court must be aware of this fact, that the late Lord Melville avowed, in terms as direct as possible, these two propositions:—first, that the Government was inseparable from the trade of India; and next, that the trade could be advantageously carried on, only through the medium of a well regulated monopoly.—These sentiments were supported throughout a long administration; they were practically enforced by Mr. Pitt and other eminent statesmen; and even adopted by Lord Melville, one of the present administration. Nor should he omit to notice the opinions of the Earl of Buckinghamshire himself, respecting all the dangers and all the evils which must accrue to the revenue, if proper



guards and precautions were not adopted. Thus hinting at the necessity of preventing that, the possibility of which he thus unquestionably admitted. In support of his opinions, and in opposition to the statement of the hon. gentleman, he thought he could not do better than by introducing, in the course of his speech, the sentiments of those great characters, whose names he had already mentioned. The hon. gentleman had not contented himself with the first proof of his ingenuity, in drawing over to his side all the friends of administration, but had endeavoured to insure still further success, by narrowing the real state of the question. He said, "it is a mere question, whether the outports shall or shall not be admitted to a participation in the import trade." It was his duty, as an ingenious sophist, thus to define it—but if that Court thought the safety of India depended on the result of the present contest, fortunately, they were not bound to admit his definitions.

... Mr. Jackson contended it was a great political question, involving the safety of the empire, and that they were bound so to consider it.—That the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) thinks there is no danger, he must suppose, as he took it for granted, that if he believed the intended arrangement was likely to affect the Government of India and of



this country, he would not have taken that opportunity to pronounce such a panegyric on the present Indian system, which this measure, in their opinions at least, must destroy and subvert. He would not, if his feelings were otherwise, have added to the enormity, or rather to the celebrity of the murder, by so much eulogium ; for it had very rarely happened, that any government had received such unbounded praise ; though he believed the hon. gent. in bestowing it by no means guilty of exaggeration.—(*Hear !*) Nay, the hon. gent. had even hoped, so much did he seem to approve of the Indian Government, that “ no radical change may take place in it ;” but, while he made this declaration, it could be plainly proved that he himself had provided for a change in his own amendment ; and it would be easy to shew the sort of indemnity to which the Company would be entitled, when the government of India was no more. The hon. gent., instead of joining the Court to *prevent* any “ radical change,” had proposed an amendment, in which an *indemnity* was recommended, when their political annihilation should have taken place.—He said, that, “ in the beginning of the negotiation, we ought to have stated to Ministers the necessity of indemnity ;” but was it not to be supposed, that such a subject would be introduced more properly by



those who suggested the alteration, than by them ?

Mr. Randle Jackson continued, by saying, that he should state the reason why Lord Buckinghamshire did not notice that point ; it was, simply, because there was no necessity for it :—it was a question of strict moral right ; and that Minister had not existed for ages, who could propound a measure, utterly subversive of the Company, without, at the same time, recurring to indemnification. He professed his belief, that, if even *Jonathan Wild* and *his gang* were at the head of Government, they would not dare to make such a proposition, without accompanying it with the offer of a just and adequate compensation. (*Hear!*) Could any merchant of Liverpool, or Glasgow, expect to derive the advantages of the Company's fortresses, warehouses, &c?—could he expect to be protected by their armies, and to make use of their organized establishments, without affording a full indemnity ? It would be a monstrous proposition ; and therefore he should think the point required no notice. It was like the immutable principle of right and wrong ; the *affirmative* was not demanded, because there existed no mind so base and so degraded as to imagine the *negative*.

One of the hon. Gentleman's first propositions related to the Association of 1793. " The



Proprietors," he said, " were then called on for their opinion ; they were requested by the Government of the country to say *yes* or *no* in that Court." This was very true ; but the hon. Gentleman admitted, notwithstanding the celerity with which the business was commenced, that the proceedings were afterwards delayed long enough to give the merchants of Liverpool, Glasgow, &c. an opportunity of meeting, and petitioning the legislature. " On that occasion, Lord Melville," said the hon. Gentleman, " was induced, by the force of these representations, to open the trade to a certain extent. He felt the necessity of transmitting fortunes made in India to this country, and the proper mode of effecting that object was by opening the private trade. His Lordship observed, that unless the Company consented to this modification, their Charter could not be renewed." But what support did the hon. Gentleman derive from this statement ? None whatever. Indeed, it operated against his argument. From this very circumstance, it was apparent, that one of the greatest India statesmen this country every saw, possessed of great information and experience, was impressed with a conviction, that the trade ought to be thrown open on those conditions which the Earl of Buckinghamshire was about to destroy. The whole extent to which



Lord Melville's principle went was this—that the opening of the trade should be under the cognizance of the East India Company; that they should remain in dominion over the persons who might chuse to embark in it; and who should send their goods in the Company's vessels, to the amount of three thousand tons, or more, as stated by a Gentleman below him. Lord Melville opened the trade with one hand, declaring, at the same time, that though he extended it, the system on which it was founded was to remain, as far as his influence could make it, a well regulated monopoly; and he gave his reasons both for the one and the other. The prosperity which India had enjoyed (not to be inferred from merchants' accounts, which were not always the true criterion of national greatness), the excellence of its Government, and the general welfare and strength which the empire had derived under it; these considerations influenced Lord Melville.

But when he agreed to extend the trade, he did not, for one moment, check or impair the principle on which the Company's system was built. The great statesmen of that day found the means of meeting all the expectations of the country, without having recourse to that which was now sought to be done, and which went to subvert that very Constitution which Lord Melville



pledged himself to support. He was very sorry that all the patronage which administration, as had been justly stated, must possess, to enable them to carry on the affairs of the state, was not applied to the improvement of the Company, instead of being directed against them. That there was room for amendment, the Directors themselves allowed; and, if the Administration exerted their influence and abilities to ameliorate the system, instead of knocking it down, they would have done infinite good to the country. Had they, instead of dealing in those sarcastic remarks, which characterized the last letter, sent for the grave and reverend persons who constituted their Executive body; had they addressed them thus—"The outline is all that we can know, let us unite our various talents, and see what can be done to amend and improve the system"—such language would have been honorable to both parties, and the result of their combined wisdom would have been useful to the empire. It was unfortunate that they had not done this, instead of driving them to an awful alternative—By taking a different course, they had lost an opportunity of conferring the greatest benefits on the public; benefits which would have made their names politically immortal.—(*Hear!*) Instead of this prudent and conciliating mode, they



had grappled with the question, and he anticipated that they would sink in the struggle ; for it could not be forgotten, that the people of Great Britain *politically destroyed* one of the greatest men amongst them (Mr. Fox), for attempting the *one-hundredth* part of that which was now proposed. Mr. Pitt did not dare to introduce such a measure ; and Lord Melville utterly disclaimed it. He was sure the people of England would not allow those of *ignobler natures* to bear away that spoil, for the endeavouring to carry off which they destroyed the lion. (*Hear ! hear !*)

If he understood the hon. Gentleman's proposition rightly, it was this—"You do not," says he to the Company, "embrace all the trade of India ; and in that proportion in which you are *minor*, you ~~are~~<sup>are</sup> injuriously to the country, by permitting foreigners to usurp that which is the right of native subjects ; and I will shew, from the increase within a certain period, how much may be done under a different management, and how much was done by the partial extension granted by the Marquis Wellesley." The hon. Gentleman stated, that in 1793. the private trade amounted to £181,700, and in 1798 to £800,000, "*Here*," says he, "is an increase ; although it had been said, prior to that time, that the trade had been carried on to the utmost of its capacity ;



in five years the importations of the private trader have mounted from £181,000 to £800,000, and in the year 1810 it rose to near three millions."

He was almost disposed, when he allowed the candour of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hume), to question his cunning; for he drew a most extraordinary inference from these facts, as he allowed them to be. He was lost in admiration at the extraordinary increase; he gave way to the exulting feelings of an Englishman; he clasped his hands, and exclaimed, "Look here! in seven years the private trade has had a rise of from £181,000 to near three millions of money." He partook of the hon. Gentleman's joy—every Englishman must feel happy in the flourishing state of our commerce; but he would ask him, under whose auspices was this change affected? Was it not under the very system which he deprecated? Was it not under the superintendence of those Directors and Proprietors, whom it was now intended to supersede? If the hon. Gentleman had said, "Did not A. go to Bombay, B. to Madras, and C. elsewhere? and mark what profits they have produced," there might be something in it; but the argument, as it now stood, plainly showed to what an astonishing height this very trade had been carried by those whom he now



wished to set aside. The hon. Gent'eman was correct in his statement but wrong in his conclusion ; for, in the latter instance, he had adduced an unanswerable argument in favor of the policy and government of the East India Company, as it now existed.

The hon. gentleman had called the attention of the Court to the circumstance of the licenses granted to private shipping by the Marquis of Wellesley, in consequence of the complaints made by the merchants in India, by which measure property to the amount of £900,000 was brought home ; but, when he stated this fact, he ought to have recollected the particular circumstances under which it took place. He should have remembered that it was done when the funds of the Company were applied to one of the greatest of political purposes, that of counteracting the machinations of a power which meditated the overthrow of the whole civilized world. He should blush for that government, which could reproach them with the defection of their funds, when they recollected for what purposes, and for whom, they were brought into that situation ! Were not their finances, at that time, applied to purposes which brought peace to India and glory to England, under the auspices of one of the greatest men of modern times—and he would name him fearlessly



—the Marquis Wellesley? The events which marked the return of that Noble Marquis to this country could not be forgotten—they must be indelibly fixed on the minds of all who heard him. At that period, he thought it his duty to make himself acquainted, as much as possible, with past events; and, in the very storm and tempest of opposition, to unveil the truth—But those times were passed; India was now in a state of peaceful tranquillity—no hostile army remaining to disturb her repose. At the very moment he spoke she was becoming powerful and productive; and might justly be termed “the right-hand and arm of the country.” When they beheld her prosperity and happiness, it was impossible not to look back with gratitude and veneration to him who was one of the prime causes of her improved situation. Was it, therefore, for the Government, at this time, to say to them, “Because you gave up your investments to achieve these objects, which have brought so much political advantage and so much glory to the country at large; because you have done this, your whole system shall be destroyed;—because you have expended your funds, in encreasing your army, to effect great national purposes, and have been, therefore, obliged to apply to government for aid, this shall be turned into an engine against you, and



those acts shall be rewarded by your subversion." (*Hear ! hear !*) " But," says the hon. gentleman, " His Majesty's government were of opinion, that you did not give all the facilities to the Private-Trade, under the stipulations of 1793, that you ought to have afforded, and that much more might be done, and they insisted that more should be done. You pleaded your Charter, but an improvement did take place, and a considerable share of commerce was given up."

Now, said Mr. Randle Jackson, though the facts might be, as the hon. gentleman stated them, still the inference was strong with the Company. Let the Court look to the circumstances. At the time when this extension took place, a new administration, of which he believed Lord Castlereagh and Viscount Sidmouth were members, had been formed ; yet, with all the experience which had been afforded, from 1793 to 1804, these Ministers, from the beginning to the end of that negotiation, never even hinted at what the Earl of Buckinghamshire mentioned in his letter. (*Hear !*) The Directors resisted that extension of the Private Trade, and he also resisted it, on the ground that it was premature. If the revocation of the Charter could have been of national benefit, then there might have been some plea for the proceeding of the Ministry of



that day.—For he held now, and always had held, and he recollected the same doctrine having been laid down by high authority, that however sacred a Charter was in its nature, it was granted for the public good, and when it ceased to be of national benefit, the party granting had a right to revoke it, on one condition ; and that was, the indemnifying those who were likely to be injured by the revocation. If the party who granted the Charter were not able to afford that indemnity, it was not a *national question* ; and, if it was not a national question, if it was not treated as such, there was an end to the *social compact*. But the difference between the measure proposed by the Earl of Buckinghamshire and the principles by which the Ministry of former days were actuated, was complete and radical. The opinion of Lord Melville was distinctly stated in his letter to the Chairman of March the 21st 1803, and was as follows : “ We are both (his Lordship and the Directors) strenuously maintaining, that the preservation of the monopoly of the East India Company is essentially requisite for the security of every important interest connected with our Indian empire ; and so deeply am I impressed with the truth of this proposition, that I am prepared explicitly to declare, that although the first formation of an East-India



Company proceeded from purely commercial considerations, the magnitude and importance to which the East India Company has progressively advanced, is now so interwoven with the political interests of the empire, as to create upon my mind a firm conviction *that the maintenance of the monopoly of the East-India Company, is even more important to the political interests of the State, than it is to the commercial interests of the Company.*" Fortified by such opinions as these, they had a right, with truth, to assume to themselves that they were not acting with partial views, as Proprietors of East-India Stock, but as Citizens of the Empire.

He knew not the persons who had called on government to throw open the trade, but he thought the Company ought to make out a strong case; and though in doing that they must satisfy the intellect and philosophy of Glasgow and of Liverpool, yet they were not obliged to satisfy the prejudiced and the self-interested. But how were they to do this? The Earl of Buckinghamshire told them, that the verbal representations of the persons who had met the Ministry, had caused them to depart from their original opinions; but he refused to let them know what the arguments made use of were: 'a. conduct very different from that adopted by Lord Melville at the



period of the last negotiation. But the Earl of Buckinghamshire went a little farther, "if," says he, "the Company are particularly desirous to know the reasons which influence us, they will find them in the Petitions on the table of the House of Commons"—if indeed any given table could hold such an immense mass. (*A laugh.*) His lordship had bound himself by this paragraph; in it he said that he would act according to the opinions contained in those petitions; he has committed himself in favor of them. Now, let any man read them, and say, whether any two of them contain a proposition by which a reasonable being would be guided. If his lordship was not very partial in considering these petitions, he must discuss other subjects, as well as the renewal of the Company's Charter; for many of them were mixed up with the two great questions of *Parliamentary Reform* and *Catholic Emancipation*. (*A laugh.*)

He hoped the noble lord, who filled a seat in the House of Peers, with so much honor to himself and advantage to the public, would call to mind his affection for the petitioners, when he felt inclined to oppose either of those measures. (*Hear! hear!*) He hoped that, when his duty impelled him to deliver his sentiments against Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation, he would recollect that his very good friends at



the Outports, to whose opinion he paid so much deference, had exhausted pages, in proving the necessity of conceding those two important questions.

The hon. gentleman, in farther illustration of his argument, had noticed the rapid strides made by the Americans in the Indian commerce (and here, much which he said, ought to be answered ; and much ought to be answered by government), in consequence of the liberty granted by this country ; he argued, from recent events, that trade might shift its seat ; that these immunities to foreigners were unfair ; and that Commerce, as was eloquently expressed by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Grant) who preceded him, would force its way, in spite of confiscation, burning and death. These were points worthy of their most serious consideration.

He had hoped, some few years ago, that he should have had an opportunity of amending and altering the regulations on this subject, when the renewal of the Charter came to be considered, for he did not believe that any person, in their political hemisphere, had then contemplated its subversion—he had hoped that it would have been an English and not an American Charter. He formerly took the liberty of stating what in his opinion would be the effect of granting so much license to the Americans :



the consequence had unfortunately been as he stated, and the same was likely to occur again, unless the subject should be attended to by His Majesty's ministers. The extent of license granted before the war, was detrimental to our interests, and a similar effect must take place, should government persist in the same system, when the Americans returned to their senses and to peace. (*Hear ! hear !*) Perhaps America was treated rather cavalierly—two Orders in Council were issued against her on a former occasion, which enabled us to seize their property. They then sent Mr. Jay to this country, to settle the differences between the two States. That gentleman said, “ feeble and young as we are, if you continue thus to torture us, we must hazard war.” On the late Orders in Council it was not his intention here to expatiate ; although he might be of opinion, that having been once issued, they should have been adhered to with more firmness. The fact, however, was, that some time after the representation of Mr. Jay, those two Orders were repealed, and compensation granted to those whose property had been taken under them. A treaty was then concluded with America, the 13th article of which gave the merchants of that country the privilege of trading to India. In negotiating this treaty,



each party thought he was overreaching the other, as was generally the case; it turned out, however, for the benefit of the Americans—the wily American Negotiator was too much for us. The treaty was meant to permit a *direct* course to India from America, but the Americans contended that a *circuitous course* was contemplated. While the subject remained in this state of indecision, that hydra, the French Revolution, began to make such rapid strides, as induced us to endeavour to keep on good terms with America; and he recollected the Letter of Lord Melville on the subject. “We must not now,” said his lordship, “be too strict in our construction of the American treaty.” The point was consequently given up; and thence it followed, that, before many years had elapsed, the Americans were almost our superiors in trade. The Portuguese and Spaniards, and every neutral State, then came forward, and claimed, as a right, the same privilege which was granted to the Americans. An Act was in consequence passed, conferring on them the same privilege as the Americans enjoyed. He had arraigned the Act in that Court, not on partial or narrow motives. — He said and would still say, that whenever the East-India Company, from want of capital, or management, failed in carrying on all the commerce which their situation



admitted, that the British merchant, on the Exchange of London, was next in rotation, and not the Americans, Spaniards, or Portuguese.

If, as the hon. gent. had stated, a variety of articles, for which they were paying money to foreigners might be procured from India, it was their duty, as far as they possibly could, to procure them from that country, by which means they might encourage the enterprize and industry of their fellow citizens, instead of enriching aliens. But when he made this observation, he must also remark, that this could be done, to the greatest extent, through the medium of the India Company. And, if the private trader felt himself aggrieved—if he desired a greater degree of liberty, let him have it;—let there be a numerical increase of tonnage—let the three thousand be enlarged to six, or even ten thousand tons; and an alteration be made in the mode of importing their staple article. “But no,” say the merchants of Glasgow, “this will not satisfy us; all colonial rights are open to human nature, and we must have liberty to go to India ourselves.” Now, he allowed that the commerce of the East ought to be conducted on the most liberal scale; but still it ought to be conducted through that medium which had shewn that it was most capable of making the wisest arrangements—a fact which was borne



out by the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Hume's) own statement, that, in seven years, the private trade had been increased from £181,000 to £800,000.

He hoped, if there was any person present connected with the government, that he would beg of them to look to the latter part of the argument of the hon. gentleman. If he were borne out by his documents, and he did not doubt but that he was, he proved that, notwithstanding the non-importation Act, such was the elasticity of commerce, that a greater trade had been carried on with the western hemisphere, since that Act was passed, than before it was in existence. He mentioned this the more particularly, because they had greatly alarmed themselves on account of the rupture with America. Now, if it were possible for this country (America having gone to war with her) to export a greater proportion of goods to the western world, *after* than *before* that event, without the assistance of the United States, it was the duty of every statesman to encourage the continuance of this independent traffic, even when peace should have been concluded. He was sure nothing had occasioned greater stupor and surprise, than the recent successes of the American privateers; and yet there was not a merchant's elerk in the city of London, who did not know that it was the privateer faction



in America which hurried that nation into hostility. (*Hear ! hear !*) Recollecting the success which attended them at the commencement of the former contest, they were anxious again to participate in similar profits ; and scarcely was the ink dried on the declaration of war, when the signature was put to letters of marque. (*Hear ! hear !*) It should be remembered, that Carthage, the greatest maritime state of ancient times, was overturned by a power, which, when she commenced the contest, was so defective in naval means, that one of the vessels of the Carthaginians, which was wrecked on her shore, was made use of as a model for the building of ships to carry on and effect the ambitious projects of the Romans. (*Hear ! hear !*) And, however contemptible in the commencement, yet that very Roman power did ultimately conquer at sea—destroy the fleets of her enemy—ruin her commercial greatness—and, at length, utterly subvert her empire. Yet the proportion of naval strength between Rome and Carthage, bore no comparison with that which America possessed at this day in reference to Great Britain. He felt, therefore, that there was no safety for England, but in keeping down America, as a maritime nation. (*Hear ! hear !*) And he hoped, when-



ever peace should be restored, that they would not be again let loose on India. (*Hear! Hear!*)

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) next advanced an argument which he thought directly in favor of the Company. He observed, "How foolish it is to say, that the export trade to China cannot be increased, when, prior to 1793, it amounted only to £629,000, and, in that year, it was no less than £1,320,000; although there was but one investment for the proprietors." But what was the reason of this increase? He called on him to state the fact. The Company had sent out a great embassy to China, one object of which was to extend their exports, and they were in consequence increased to the sum mentioned with such confidence by the hon. gentleman. Suppose, when the China export trade was only £629,000, that the gentlemen of Glasgow had observed to Ministers—"Bless us! the China trade is only so much, but we are sure, if you open it, that we shall raise it beyond your most sanguine expectations;" and suppose Ministers were won by assertions like this, strenuously urged, and agreed to the proposal; he put it to the hon. gentleman, and to the experience of hundreds about him, who knew the jealous disposition of the Chinese—he put it to his candour, had those persons been suffered to



proceed to China, would the export trade there or an atom of it have now remained ?

(Mr. *Hume* said, " Certainly not !")

The hon. gentleman candidly admitted that it would not. What then became of his argument ? Instead of keeping the trade in a fair and just medium, would he expose it to every danger, by throwing it open to those, who would not be under the control of the Company ? But certain persons said, there was an increased capacity, which might be still further improved. The Company had taken advantage of that increased capacity, and they had shewn no disposition to relax their exertion. Still, however, the hon. gentleman contended, that the trade should be thrown open, although he admitted, that if such representations had been attended to, at a former day, the whole trade must now have been extinguished.

The hon. gentleman also had noticed the prodigious increase of exports, between 1806 and 1810. But what did all this shew him ? — That, under the Government and Constitution of which he had spoken with so much respect, as admirably adapted to support the Indian Empire, both the export and import trade had progressively increased. And was not this an argument, that any institution which could



do so much service, was that which ought to be continued and supported, instead of giving it up for a plan which was untried, and consequently unknown? The hon. gent. next said, "but your trade to India is a losing trade; why, then, all this anxiety to preserve it?" There *was* a reason, that might have occurred to him. It appeared from an account laid before the House of Commons, that, of the eight millions which were charged against the Company, five millions had been expended in voluntary contributions and other splendid acts of patriotism.—(*Hear! Hear!*) He wondered, when the hon. gent. was at a loss to account for a few millions, that he did not recollect how much had been disbursed in that manner. "Still," said the hon. gent. "your trade is a losing one; even your Chairman said so." Now, when he mentioned an hon. Chairman, in support of his argument, he should have quoted his words. In his letter of the 13th of January, 1809, to the present Lord Melville, then president of the Board of Control, he said, "in fact, the Indian trade, as an object of gain, has gradually ceased to be an object of importance either to the Company or to individuals." The late Lord Melville said the same thing.—"It is of no consequence," said his Lordship, "to any one, except in a political point of view; and I will



therefore uphold it, as the pillar of the East-India Company, while I regard that Company as the pillar of the state."

But he (Mr. Jackson) denied that it was a losing trade ; some years it produced one hundred thousand pounds ; some years three, some years four, and even five hundred thousand pounds had been produced by it ; and one year had occurred, in which the amount was seven hundred thousand pounds. On an average therefore, they might estimate the profits at £100,000 per annum. " But at least," said the hon. gent. (Mr. Hume), " you must admit that £300,000 has been lost within a certain time." Supposing this to be the fact, was there no great political object answered by that loss ? Need the hon. gentleman be told, that it was the means of keeping up their remittances, and continuing their well regulated monopoly ; which Ministers and Statesmen, now no more, for, on such an occasion, we must invoke the mighty dead, had declared absolutely necessary to our prosperity and our security ? (*Hear ! hear !*)

But the hon. gentleman's proposition was this, " you have got the Indian trade in your possession, and a most extensive and profitable branch of commerce it may be made in other hands ; but you have lost by it, and, therefore, it shall be taken from you ; this course shall be pursued.



for no better reason than because I say the trade is unproductive." — (*Mr. Hume here intimated he had said, not that it should be taken away, but, that, as a losing trade, it could not be of any importance to the Company, if it were opened*). — Mr. Jackson resumed, by stating, that the point was very immaterial—his proposition at present was, that the trade had not been a losing trade. But supposing it was, in some years, he appealed to the candour of the hon. gentleman, as versed in mercantile affairs, whether, if he had a variety of adventures, intended for five or six different ports, on one of which there was a loss, would he on account of the defalcation in that port, give up all the others? And he would say, that if they acted upon this plan, and retained nothing but what was profitable, they must give up Bombay and Madras, the returns from which were very small, and the expences very considerable; but they retained them as the outworks of their defence, by which they were enabled to protect Bengal; and, as long as by possessing this trade they were enabled to support their well regulated monopoly, which was necessary to the preservation of their whole system, they had no right to complain, even if the loss were greater.

The hon. gentleman concluded his speech by a variety of statements, connected with their reve-



nues and territory. In the first instance, he told them, that there was no end to the capacity of the India trade ; and that, if the private trader was suffered to improve it, ten times as much might be done as was at present effected. But the moment he came to that part of the case, where the Company apprehended the danger to their Indian territory existed, namely, from the influx of strangers, the so much-boasted trade became a trifle, and he asked, a little jocularly,—“ What do you fear from a few runaway vagabonds from the ships of the private-traders, on an extent of coast of near 3000 miles ?” He would tell him : from the provisions, of which he had spoken in such high terms, from the active police which was established, it was clear that danger had hitherto been apprehended ; and if the government, compact as it was now, had its hand on every individual who conducted himself contrary to the established regulations ; if every European stranger was arrested by the police ; and if such strictness was considered so important, as to induce a clause in every treaty between the Company and the native powers (which were regularly laid before the Board of Control)—if, he repeated, the government found it so important a thing to guard against the entrance of unknown persons, at the present time ; he put it to the hon.



gentleman, whether he must not admit, that much greater dangers were likely to arise, if Europeans were permitted to find their way into India, unchecked and uncontrouled? Must not indiscriminate commerce, to use the words of Lord Melville, be followed by indiscriminate access? And who could point out the boundary at which the evil thus produced would terminate?

Throughout the whole of the hon. gentleman's arguments he had given the go-bye completely to any constitutional effect which might arise from the alteration. On this point he appeared not to indulge the smallest fear. Yet he must himself allow, that if the government even lined the coasts with officers, to preserve the revenue, as had been observed, this alone would produce some extent of patronage. The danger to the constitution, in the event of a change, had been most emphatically pointed out by the late Lord Melville, and he made this observation, because an indiscreet notice had been taken of the expression made use of by the Directors, in their letter of the 30th of December last—in which they said that the subject involved “questions of the last importance to the safety of the British empire in India and of the British constitution at home.” The Earl of Buckinghamshire, in answer to this, indulged, he thought, in some levity.



He seemed to thank them for their care, but told them, that “ the safety of the British empire in India and the British constitution at home, would not be overlooked by Ministers.” But he should observe, that the words quoted by the Directors were those of Lord Melville, one of the greatest men this country ever produced—that profound statesman, whom he had the honor to call his friend, said, “ that the Constitution could not survive the destruction of the East-India Charter,” and Mr. Fox, who was barely *suspected* of harbouring such an intention, politically perished.

From the many protestations of the hon. gentleman, he should suppose he had no intention of transferring the government;—but, however guarded he was in his speech, he was not so in his amendment; there, the intention broke out. That amendment contained two propositions; the one referring to that indemnity which they might demand two or three years after the mischief was done, when they were no longer the compacted, united body, they now were; the other relating to regulations and safeguards in embryo. The amendment began by stating, “ this Court deeming it prudent and proper to acquiesce in the principles and preliminaries stated by his Majesty’s Ministers through the President of the Board



of Control," (that principle being the admission of the Outports to a general and indiscriminate right of commerce), "it is resolved that it be referred back to the Court of Directors to continue their negotiation,"—for what?—for continuing the Indian empire complete and entire? No—but for carrying "these principles" (Lord Buckinghamshire's principles) "into effect." The hon. gentleman admitted, in the language of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, the great mischief which must ensue—if what? "If regulations," of which they now knew nothing, "were not adopted."

Mr. Jackson then went on to state, that his had been a very dry and unpleasant task; but that, by going a little into the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Hume's) numerical statements, he had shown, that they were, to make the best of them, a series of arguments, supporting the Company; and, by pointing out what they had already done, inferring the propriety of permitting them to do still more. With respect to the compensation spoken of by the hon. gentleman, he should say, that it was unnecessary to mention it—for, after a long period of exertions and services, in support of the country, no Minister, no Man, would dare, in a moral nation, to deprive them of their rights, without granting the most equitable indemnity.



The hon. gentleman had insinuated, that the Directors might be so much affected, in *their* department, by the proposed change, which perhaps would deprive them of part of their patronage, as to render them hostile to the measure ; — he called on the Court to compare this with their conduct, and to judge whether the supposition were well or ill-founded. If the Directors could have acted under such an impression, their conduct would have been diametrically *the reverse* of what it had been ; and, instead of telling them that the alteration would be injurious to the country, and pointing out the necessity of opposing it, they would have said, as they themselves could not, in fact, be affected by it, “ oh ! perhaps it may be no great matter ! — you had better consent to the measure ! ” If they were actuated by any mean or selfish views, this would have been their language, as every one of them might rest assured of being indemnified. — But the Directors conducted themselves on different principles ; they who were not likely to be affected by this change, said to them, who would be touched by it, — “ It is a cause which compromises the safety of the Indian empire, and of the British constitution ; and we think it is your duty not to agree to this proposition.” —



It was intended, it seems, to continue the exclusive trade to China in the hands of the Company; but it was utterly farcical, and adding insult to injury, to think they could retain it entire, if the adventurers were admitted to the Archipelago of the Eastern Seas. The Directors were supported in their opinions by many of the greatest Statesmen of modern times, some of whom were now living; their opinions were fortified by the sentiments of the present Ministers themselves, who, in answer to the *sixth proposition* of the Directors, admitted the danger to which the China Tea trade would be exposed, from indiscriminate commerce, and the proximity of the Eastern Islands, from which so much danger was expected. They afterwards departed from this principle, stating that *verbal representations* had caused the change, leaving to them the Herculean labour of perusing the various petitions from the Outports. The question then was, should they now,—and, perhaps, it was one of the last acts of their political existence,—avow their determination to support and uphold their Directors in the course they had taken, to the very end of the contest, if it were necessary? Knowing that they were not fighting the battle of the Company, but of the Empire; knowing that they were fighting the battle of the natives,



of India, who were their subjects ; he was sure they would act with firmness. He was convinced the intellect of the country was on their side. He meant not to cast any imputation on the feelings of gentlemen at the Outports, who had a right to improve every advantage which offered, but he might be allowed to hope, that the interests of the Company would not be suffered to sink before the speculations of Glasgow and of Liverpool. (*Hear ! hear ! hear !*)

Mr. *Weyland* said, he thought himself peculiarly fortunate, that the extraordinary talent and unanimity with which the debate was carried on, rendered it unnecessary for him to go into any argument on the opposition which had been given to his resolutions. He now conceived that it would be advisable to adjourn till Tuesday. In the interim he should endeavour, in compliance with the suggestions of several honorable Proprietors, to compress the remaining propositions into one ; by which means they should be able to go through that part of the business, and also the reply of Mr. Hume, if the courtesy of the proprietors should permit him again to address them. It was obvious, if they went through the *seventeen* resolutions, *seriatim*, and had a debate on each, Parliament must meet long before they had decided.



*Sir Hugh Inglis* stated, that by the idea which had fallen from the hon. Proprietor, it should seem as if he considered the hon. mover of the amendment *entitled* to a reply. Now, he believed, in all assemblies where subjects were debated, that privilege was only allowed to the original mover of a resolution; but as no person had spoken on the other side, except the hon. proprietor (Mr. Hume), he left it to the indulgence of the Court, whether they would place him in a situation again to address them. If they adjourned now, this could be determined hereafter; but he could not permit the Court to break up without stating, that if Mr. Hume were allowed to reply, it was as a matter of *courtesy*, and not of *right*.

*Sir Hugh Inglis* then put the question of adjournment till Tuesday, the 26th instant.

Mr. K. *Smith* suggested the propriety, if it met with the approbation of the gentlemen on both sides of the bar, of assembling on that day at an hour earlier than the ordinary time, which would add much to the facility of getting through the business.

*Sir Hugh Inglis*, considering it as most desirable that they should finish the discussion as speedily as possible, yet with all due deliberation, thought it would be advisable, instead



of twelve precisely, to meet at eleven o'clock, on Tuesday next, on which day he hoped, from what had fallen from the hon. mover, that they should be able to come to a decision.

*Mr. Alderman Atkins* requested that he might be allowed to say a word before the Court adjourned. He thought it must be admitted that the Court would be unanimous in their opinion as to the propriety which had marked the proceedings of the Directors. It was agreed, on all hands, that this was a question of immense magnitude; now that being granted, he begged to ask, whether it was beyond their power to have another meeting with His Majesty's Ministers, without driving either party to a situation which must be extremely disagreeable to both; by that means possibly they might be prevented from coming to resolutions which were so decidedly at variance with the sentiments of Government. Before they committed themselves in this proceeding, was it not better that they should consider the question a little farther, which might have the effect of extricating them from such an unpleasant situation?

*Sir Hugh Inglis* observed, that he was sure the worthy Alderman would perceive, that, in the present stage of the business, it was morally impossible for him, situated as he was, to give



him any satisfactory answer. The appeal had been made by His Majesty's Ministers to the Court of Proprietors; the last letters received from Government were meant to be submitted to *them*. It was therefore for *them* to decide, and for the Directors to obey their decision. At the same time, that circumstance did not preclude His Majesty's Ministers from sending to the executive body, who would at all times be ready to meet them, when they could do so on principles commensurate with the safety of the Company.

*Mr. Alderman Atkins* said, he should be extremely happy that His Majesty's Ministers should have it conveyed to them, that the Court was willing to extend the trade—on a liberal footing, on broad and national grounds, such as should be consistent with the security and safety of the empire. This was what he desired might be done. If the Government then said, “the trade shall only be opened as we like,” the Court would stand acquitted of any narrow view, and Ministers would incur a responsibility they did not now contemplate.

The question of adjournment until Tuesday was then put and carried.



TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1813.

The Court assembled at eleven o'clock, and the minutes of the last Court having been read—

*Sir Hugh Inglis* opened the business by stating, that the Court was met for the purpose of taking into farther consideration the very momentous question that had been submitted to them.

*Mr. K. Smith* said, that he rose with much diffidence, to request their attention, after so many eloquent and powerful arguments had been adduced; but he thought it a duty incumbent on him, and on every member of the Court, at that momentous crisis, to give all the assistance in their power on so important a subject. In viewing the papers laid before the Court, he could not refrain from offering the Directors his most sincere thanks, not only as a Proprietor, but as a British subject, for the manly, upright, and temperate conduct they had maintained on the present occasion. He wished he could speak as favourably of the letter of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and say that it displayed as much discreteness and moderation. It was a production to



which no man in this country could look with indifference; it not only threatened to annihilate the East-India Company, but to destroy the vital spirit of the British Constitution. He did not think, from his knowledge of Lord Buckinghamshire, that it was the production of his pen; but if the deliberation of His Majesty's ministers had produced such sentiments, he could not believe that they had fairly and candidly considered the importance of the subject.

In the first place, as to the Charter, he had it in his power, professionally, to answer some arguments which were adduced on a former day by an hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume). With respect to the general subject now before them, he was of opinion, and ever had been, that it was impossible the Company could exist, under the proposition of which His Majesty's ministers had laid down the basis. If the imports and exports were to be thrown open, he was sure, that every one who knew the situation of the India trade must see that it was in the nature of things, that the China trade could be preserved. The Earl of Buckinghamshire must have known, when he was in India, that the trade itself did not depend so much on the ships which came from this country, as the vessels going from port to port there.



Hitherto, all their dependence was on the outward cargoes, which consisted principally of cotton, and the homeward voyage was a matter of secondary consideration ; but now, under the new system, the homeward cargo would become such an object to the private merchants, that it would be impossible to prevent them from bringing the article of Tea from China to this country. Every man who commanded one of these ships, as the persons employing them could not give them a sufficient subsistence, would bring home, illicitly, the articles of Tea and Silk. It might, it was true, be but in small quantities ; yet twenty chests of tea, and a few bales of silk, thus smuggled by a numerous class of adventurers, would, in the end, be an object of great magnitude both to the Company and the country. How would it be possible to prevent this species of traffic, aided as it would be by persons going out of the ports of England, Ireland and Scotland ? and if these facilities did exist, must not the revenue suffer almost to an incalculable extent ? There was another important consideration in these small ships, indifferently manned and armed ; the risk of being captured by the enemy would be very great. In making the remark, he was not calculating the loss which the individual would suffer, but the defalcation which must take place in the revenue. The government said, they would take



steps to prevent this;—but they knew, in the West-Indies, that two or three ships were permitted to run out, without convoy, and would not the gentlemen of the outports, in this country, expect the same liberty? With respect to the state of the Company's ships, no one could doubt their present efficiency.—It was well known, that government had, on former occasions, resorted to them for the defence of the country; and a few years since, when they applied to the Company for assistance, they received some of the finest ships that ever were in His Majesty's Navy. He thought, therefore, that government ought maturely to pause, before they attempted a measure, which must destroy that great source of strength.

If the hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume) had weighed the matter for one moment, he would not have cast the reflection on the Directors, which he had done, with respect to the extra shipping. He had declared, that the extra ships had been dispatched out of season, and that a loss had in consequence been incurred by the private trader. He boldly affirmed too, that out of *seventy ships*, one half had been dispatched at an improper period. He ought to have gone the length of saying, that, out of *three hundred and seventy ships*, only about *forty* had been sent out of season. Now, he would venture to tell him, that this was not the fact.



Company, but of the private trade; (*Hear! Hear!*) —he had known ships waiting a month for the private trader, in this country, when the Company's freights were all on board; and he knew of instances in India, in which delays had been attributed to the same cause. The hon. gentleman must recollect, that the Company had used every means in their power, by the manner in which they took up ships, and the terms upon which they engaged them, to prevent them from sailing out of season, or being employed in any emergency.— But, when they had been so employed, it was not at the instance of the Company, but in consequence of an exigency of the state. The expeditions fitted out for the conquests of the Isles of France, Batavia, and on other occasions, had led to those detentions, of which the hon. gentleman complained, but which had not been caused by the East-India Company. (*Hear!*) It was known, that the Company could have no reason for detaining their ships, in India, inasmuch as they chiefly put Saltpetre on board, which was always ready,— whereas the private trader, from the difficulty attending his speculations, was never in so advantageous a situation. The anxiety to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy, by making them sail in stated numbers, and giving them proper convoy, might occasion some delay;



but that was not for the benefit of the Company alone, but for the sake of the revenue. For, if the ships were taken, the private trader would be ruined, and the country would be impoverished.

The hon. gentleman had stated, that the seven ships which were unfortunately lost, were dispatched out of season, and that the disaster occurred in consequence of that circumstance. He would admit that some of them were dispatched out of season; and if the Company had a supernatural power, he would coincide with him in thinking, that some blame was imputable to them; but they could not command the elements.—Three of those ships were sent out of season; but *four*, which did not contain an ounce of the private trade, met the same fate. They were properly manned, and, in every respect, fit to cope with the climate—such an occurrence had not before taken place for twenty years; and, within his experience, he recollected but one instance, in such a latitude and longitude, of so dreadful a gale having been encountered.—It was in the case of Captain Hay, whose vessel was much injured, although happily not lost, in a storm equally violent. He should now state the reason why the vessels to which he had alluded were dispatched out of season. Two of them (he was not sure of the third,) were set afloat at the regular and proper



time ; but the exigency of the State occasioned them to be detained ; they were put under the orders of Sir Home Popham, whom they joined at Portsmouth ; from thence they proceeded to Cork, to Rio Janeiro, and the Cape of Good Hope ; they, in consequence, did not arrive at Bengal until a late period, when it was not thought advisable to send them immediately back ; and they were kept until October. Now, he really thought the Company's servants abroad ought not to be blamed for this ; and they, as Proprietors, ought to support them ; for, he was sure, they did not wish the private merchants, trading through the medium of the Company, to sustain any injury whatever. The private trader seemed to think, that he had much to complain of, in the mode in which the extra ships were taken up ; but, if the trade was thrown open, the freight would not be so low as it was at present. In regulating the price of freight,

Company charged in proportion to what they paid to the individual owners ; and the private trader now procured his freight at £21 per ton. Now, £21 per ton, considering the security the Company was obliged to give, was a freight of which they could have no reason to complain. The Company's liberality, in this instance, extended far beyond any thing he could



conceive; and he thought the private trader, instead of finding fault, should bow down, with thanks, to the Company, for permitting him to enjoy the advantages he did, upon such easy terms. If the ships were detained beyond a certain time, the Company paid a demurrage of one shilling and sixpence per ton per day. Did they charge this to the private trader?—No—they paid the whole of it out of their own pockets; so, that, in fact, they paid as great a freight as the private trader, and as much as the article of Saltpetre could bear. (*Hear! hear!*)

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume,) in a part of his speech, had thought proper to pronounce a very high eulogium on the naval officers of the Company, of whom, he should ever thank God, he had been one; but, in the same breath, he told them, that the captains in the Outports would do the business quite as well.—But, from the experience he had had with the Company's officers, he felt, that, in the one instance, they would trust their property to men of honor, to men of education and principle, in whom they could confide—they were men brought up in the Company's service from their childhood; unfit, from their situations in life, to go into the employment of the owners of 400-ton ships; and men to whom the Company had, upon all occasions, expressed themselves



obliged ; whereas, in the other, the persons who were likely to be sent from the Outports, must of necessity be wholly ignorant of the service in which they were about to embark.—He held in his hand a paper, which shewed the high sentiments of respect entertained by the Court of Directors for the officers of the Company's navy ; and it appeared, that a sum of not less than £95,562, had been distributed amongst them for their gallant defence and honorable care of the Company's property, at different times ;—added to which, there were one or two private donations, and two captains received handsome annual pensions from the bounty of the Company. There then were nearly £100,000, paid to the naval officers ; and he must tell the hon. gent. that this constituted a part of the five millions he could not account for ; this, it was true, was a small proportion, but it was a part of it. The hon. gentleman had also said, that the ships sent from the Outports would take on board a number of men, whose families being left behind, would serve as a sort of security for their good conduct. But what would be the consequence ?—What was to become of the supply of Seamen for His Majesty's navy, in India, which had hitherto been solely supplied through the medium of the Company's ships ; not one of them leaving less, upon an average, than twenty



men, for the public service? Now, if these men were taken from on board the ships of the private merchants, to supply the vacancies in the navy, what must become of their families?—they must either become burdens to their parishes, or starve. Therefore this argument was fallacious. If the Government could not procure such men, in India, as were fit for the fleets there, they must supply the deficiency at an enormous loss to this country; and, if the mariners were taken from on board private merchants' ships, they must proceed on their homeward bound voyage manned with natives. Within the last year, 2660 Lascars, who were brought over to this country, were all fed and clothed at the expense of the Company, and sent back more comfortable than when they came. If the trade was opened, great numbers of Lascars would arrive with every fleet, and would be left to wander over the country in a state of starvation. Humanity alone, in this respect, called on them to oppose the measure.

Having answered these two points, he should conclude by requesting the Court of Proprietors to recollect, that it was not only the gentlemen in their service, that would be affected by opening the trade, but thousands of surveyors, lightermen, and labourers, would be injured by it. The hon. gent. stated, that these persons must all be remu-



nerated. He could devise no other means by which this could be done, than through the government of the country; and how would they effect the object of remuneration?—Why, the taxes must be raised to pay it. In his opinion no other mode could be devised. But, what was to become of their pensioners; the widows and the orphans of those veterans, by whose exertions they were placed in the situation in which they now stood?—Why they must starve, or be thrown helpless upon the wide world; (*Hear!*) for it was not possible that government could suggest a mode of relief, except by taxation. He himself had no objection to the question being brought before Parliament. He was convinced that if the Members of both Houses were calmly and moderately to consider the subject, a majority of them would say, “the Company must not be annihilated in that manner.” He, for one, had no fear to go before the House of Commons. He would let the persons interested in that great event, plead their cause before the bar of that honorable House; he would let the petitions from the commanders, officers, and seamen, be laid before them; and, with these calls upon their justice and humanity, he was satisfied they could not for one moment entertain so monstrous a proposition as that of annihilating their hopes of future comfort



and support. (*Hear!*) He was sure the nation at large did not wish to subvert their rights; and, however general the wish might be for the extension of the private-trade, it was only, he was confident, desired by the candid and the liberal, through the medium of the East-India Company. He begged pardon for having so long trespassed on the attention of the Court, but he could not, consistently with his own feelings, upon this important subject, refrain from expressing at once his total dissent from the arguments of the hon. gent. and from the amendment which he had proposed to the Court.

Mr. Trower said, he was desirous, before this debate drew to a close, to address them very briefly; not that he flattered himself, after the able manner in which the subject had been discussed, that he could offer any thing new or particularly worthy of their attention; but, on so grave an occasion, the general expression of individual opinion might, he thought, be attended with a beneficial effect. When they looked over the correspondence, it was impossible not to be struck by the unstatesmanlike letter addressed by the Earl of Buckinghamshire to their executive body. (*Hear! Hear!*) It was characterized by a want of temper, prudence, and respect, which he could not have expected from such a



quarter. The hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume) had endeavoured to justify that letter, by a comparison with the correspondence of a former period, and by introducing an extract from a letter, which was equally intemperate. But, did he mean to contend, that an offensive letter written in 1793, was an apology for an offensive letter written in 1813? What did my Lord Buckinghamshire say in that letter? "They," the Ministers, "have not felt that it was within the range of their duty to engage in a controversy upon the point at issue." This language was certainly not what the situation of the East-India Company entitled them to expect. But it was not merely the *manner*, but the *matter* of this letter which was so objectionable. In it, Ministers seemed to have taken up the principle of the American government—a principle which had been so much deprecated by them. The Americans say, "give up the right of taking your seamen from on board our ships, and we will tell you how we intend to prevent their entrance in future." (*Hear ! Hear !*) So says the noble lord—"give up the point of opening your trade, both export and import, without restriction, and then I will tell you what are the rules and regulations by which the dangers you apprehend shall be obviated." (*Hear ! hear !*) There was much of the feeling of



the *dictator* in this proceeding—certainly very little of the mild and conciliating spirit of the *negociator*.

But, whatever were the terms in which it had been made, the proposition was too objectionable to be attended to. The noble lord called on them to give up the India Trade, on which the hon. Chairman had shewn the safety of their China trade, depended. The hon. gent. (Mr. Hume) had been labouring to prove that it was a losing trade ; admitting that to be fact, still, if it was the safeguard and barrier of the China trade, it ought to be retained. They were not called upon to open it for the benefit of the nation at large, but to enable one part of the people to enrich themselves at the expense of the other. What right, he would ask, had the traders of the Outports to take the bread out of the mouths of their fellow traders in London ?—If the question were merely commercial, the arguments of the hon. gentleman would be somewhat less objectionable — and the petitioners might have a right to expect a participation. But it was very different; and those who argued it merely as a commercial question, took a narrow and contracted view of it. Such was the view taken by those who had raised this delusion through the country.

The cry of “ *no Monopoly* ” had been set up ; and, like the wicked and senseless cry



of "*no Popery*," seemed to have been adopted for the purpose of saving its promoters the trouble of adducing arguments. But where were the proofs of this monopolizing spirit to be found? were they to be seen in the wisdom and humanity which had distinguished their government in the great empire committed to their charge? They should look to the 5th Report on India Affairs for an answer to this question. Or were they to be found in the sacrifices which they had made for the benefit of the country? They should look to their items of expenditure for an answer to this. Or were they to be found in the conquests they had achieved abroad? They should look for an answer to their public records. No, their monopolizing spirit was nowhere to be found, but in the minds of those who expected to raise their own fortunes on the ruin of the Company. And could it be believed, that this great and mighty system, was to be put to hazard by the clamours of the prejudiced and the interested? Was it to be believed, that an establishment which had promoted the honour and greatness of the empire at home, and the welfare of an immense territory abroad, should be swept away, for the purpose of trying a chimerical experiment? That a weak and wavering administration should catch at such a mode of supporting themselves,



was easily to be imagined ; but that the wisdom of Parliament could be brought to acquiesce in so dangerous an expedient, an expedient destructive to the constitution, and ruinous to the country, was not within the verge of credibility. They should then be true to themselves : they should appeal to the honour of Parliament—whatever was their determination, it would have justice for its basis. And, perhaps, it might be well to recollect, that a former attempt to break down the establishments of the Company, from views of personal ambition, ended in the ruin of the minister who had made it. (*Hear !*)

He had now only to express his cordial assent to the resolution which had been submitted by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Weyland) and to signify the great pleasure he derived from witnessing the unanimity with which they had been acceded to by the rest of the Court.

Mr. *Bosanquet* began by observing, that after a period of more than thirty years, during which time the Court had done him the honor of placing him there as a Director behind the bar, he should feel deficient both in justice to himself and in duty to the proprietors, if, on a question of such importance, he could remain silent.—The circumstances which had occurred during that time, the prominent situa-



tions which he had filled, must have given him, without presuming to possess superior ability, a more enlarged view of those subjects which were connected with the interest of the Company, than could possibly be attained by those who had not the same local advantages.

He only feared that he should be compelled to trespass for a considerable length of time on the indulgence of the Court. The question was so extensive, it embraced so many interests, it was of such extraordinary a magnitude, that it was impossible for him to take a confined view of it. All he could promise was, as far as he was able, not to wander from the subject under discussion. The Court might, perhaps, think his view of it too extensive, but they would find, that every thing which he should state would be necessary, for bringing those pictures before the eye of the public, which he wished to exhibit, in order at once to develop the matters connected with that great question, and he hoped to answer the objections which had been recently offered. The first object of inquiry, he conceived, ought to be the Indian empire. This was the apple of contention; but he trusted it would not prove, in the end, the apple of discord: he hoped this would not be the case, nor did he see why it should be so.



*(Hear ! hear !)* Every man was entitled to form an opinion, and where a contrariety of sentiments prevailed, truth was likely to be elicited by the collision ; if he merely stated what he really felt, and expressed himself with that attention to the opinions of others which ought on all occasions to be observed, he thought that no man, under any circumstances whatever, should blame him for his frankness and candour.

He had already observed, that he thought the first object was the Indian empire. If the Court would have the goodness to consider the map of India, they would see, that, from Cape Comorin to their possessions, somewhere about Delhi, comprised an extent of sixteen or eighteen hundred miles ; presenting, on the one side, an almost uninterrupted line of sea coast, from Cape Comorin to their possessions in Bengal ; and, on the other side, from that Cape to Bombay, with the exception of the dominions of the Pashwa, presenting, also, an immense extent of coast : fringed with creeks and bays, and studded with islands. The interior of the Peninsula was held partly by the Company, and partly by independent states. He had never heard what the population of these extensive countries exactly was, and he believed it was impossible to tell very precisely ; but he should



suppose, that from fifty to sixty millions was not very much beyond the bounds of calculation.

If at the same time the proprietors would look to the other possessions in India, partly held by the Company, and by the Public, they would see at once the immense magnitude of the territory now possessed by Great Britain in that quarter of the globe. The dominion of this country extended over part of Ceylon, the Molucca islands, Batavia, Prince of Wales Island, part of Java, the Isle of France, and what may be called the keys of the eastern territories, the Cape of Good-Hope. Whether it was prudent to take so extensive an empire, under our Government, it was not for him to determine—whether it might be better managed by the Crown or by the East-India Company, it was not now necessary to discuss; but some facts, he might state, which could not be contradicted; one of these was, that the territories were acquired without one shilling expense to the country, except what they had had in common with the rest of their fellow subjects, the support of his Majesty's fleet. He was sure he might say, that even those parts, of which the Crown had taken possession, were, in a great measure, subdued at the expense of the East-India Company. He also might venture to assert, that all the Company got in return for these services, was an exclusive trade to



India and China; but, if that trade had been carried on to as large an extent in the hands of the Company as if the public had possessed it, the Country at large had lost nothing, and could have no right to complain. It was true the Company had benefitted by that trade; but if it had been pushed by their means to its greatest possible extent, then he contended that their gain had been no way detrimental to the Nation.—And he begged leave to say, as he had heard it loudly and distinctly asserted, “that the kingdom had suffered considerably by this immunity,” that the position still remained to be proved. Every man might give an opinion; but, after all, “the proof of the pudding would ultimately be in the eating.” (*A laugh.*)

He professed himself firmly to believe, that the trade to and from India was as large, or larger, in the hands of the Company, than it would have been if an exclusive possession had not been granted to them. The necessary consequence of what he had stated was this—if these territories had been conquered by the country, they must have been afterwards either surrendered, or else supported at a considerable expense to the empire in general. These countries had been obtained; he thought no doubt could be entertained as to what ought to be done in the present case; every effort should be made to retain them. Without



going into the argument, whether it was policy for a country, with a population of from twelve to fifteen millions, to take possession of kingdoms so extensive, he apprehended in this point it must be perfectly clear, that the surrender of any of these possessions, would be a surrender to the only power in Europe capable of keeping them or of destroying us. (*Hear! hear!*) He thought he might venture to assert, that the loss which would ensue to Great Britain would only tend to aggrandize France, a country already too powerful. And if India were once under the dominion of a French force, the Chinese might tremble for their Empire, and our whole Eastern commerce would be annihilated for ever. This was not a question, then, which related only to the port of London—the merchants of the outports,—the East-India Company, or even to Great Britain herself;—it was a question involving the interest of the world at large; for the strength of Great Britain is the strength of the civilized part of the globe. (*Hear! hear!*)

Happily for us a star had risen in the North—God send that it may continue to shine; and God send that this power, which has so recently made a glorious struggle in defence of her rights, may, with the assistance of Great Britain, be able to save us and the enslaved Continent from



the iron hand of military despotism. The first question arising from the points he had stated, was, in what manner it was proper to hold the empire of India? Were he called on to give a theoretical opinion, it would be this—that it ought to be held in that way which would be most beneficial to the general interests of the empire at large; but then he should attach to that opinion, an observation—that what would be most beneficial to the empire at large, must be that which would maintain the Indian empire in safety and security. (*Hear! hear!*) As the Court must know, as it will consider the importance of the connection, that we are removed upwards of 3000 miles from India,—so will it acknowledge that the chains and links which attach it to this country, ought to be strong. There was another point which should not be omitted—it was a part of their duty to hold the Indian empire with justice to fifty millions of people, whom they were called on to govern; and this he hoped would never be lost sight of either by the East-India Proprietors or by the Government.

After the opinion he had given on the theoretical part of the subject, were he called upon to state exactly what he conceived ought to be done, he should feel it most difficult, from every consideration he had been able to give the ques-



tion, to point out a clear and distinct course. His reading was not very extensive,—but he recollected a circumstance stated in history, when one of the ancients was asked his opinion of the nature of God,—he requested a day to consider of it; when that had elapsed, he was as undetermined as before, and requested two days;—at the termination of that time he begged to be allowed three days more; still finding the subject beyond his comprehension,—he declined any further consideration of it,—his own mind had been no less puzzled and perplexed by the practical part of this important question,—the Court might therefore conceive with what wonder he had seen men, from the North and from the South, giving a clear, and distinct, and decided opinion on a subject, which perhaps they had never before considered, and which from a want of local and practical experience it was impossible they could be acquainted with. Some persons, who were learned commentators on the works of others; tell us, that “India cannot be held in any other way than by sending one of our own princes to govern it.” Whether this proposition was made from a feeling, that the connection with the Royal family at home, would secure the empire to the mother country, he could not de-



termine; but every person must be aware, that this was a foundation which never was, nor ever could be lasting—nor was such an event ever likely to take place; because, a Prince placed on any throne, in justice to those over whom he was placed, ought to study only the good of his own subjects, with an *undivided* feeling, which could not be expected, nor accomplished, where two empires with different interests had at the same time, a claim upon his attention.

Another gentleman started up and said, that, “in every point of view, *monopoly* is objectionable.” This was not a new discovery nor a new principle; we all know it is a restraint,—but we also know, that all Government is an infringement upon natural rights; yet, in a state of society, men must give up a part, to secure what was of greater importance, a whole. Another says, “if the present Company will not comply with the demand of the public, let another exclusive Company be formed.” The gentleman who gave this advice, reminded him of a teacher of languages who utterly scorned the rules of grammar, only because he was entirely ignorant of them. He ought to know, that though the exclusive trade to India and China was not granted *in perpetuo*, the corporation might exist, and an exclusive trade could by law be granted to no



other Company; no other corporate body could exist, as an East-India Company, while the present was in being. But while his mind had been occupied in studying these points, from the experience he possessed and the information he procured, others had taken a shorter cut, and had outstripped him in coming to their conclusions.

If it were his duty, in the present instance, only to point out errors, it would not be a very difficult task. In the Board of Control, in the Court of which he was a member, and even in the Court of Proprietors, something might be pointed out which called for a remedy. But his mind had been relieved from all these difficulties, by the successive statements of His Majesty's ministers, that the present system with some alterations ought to be continued. In the outset, a point of discussion had been introduced, which surprised him very much — that point was, whether the *Sword* should remain with the Company? that had since been given up, and the dispute was now about the *Purse*. He knew of but two principles on which men could be governed; *hope* and *fear*; and if either of these principles was withdrawn, the authority of the governor must be destroyed, no empire can be shown to exist upon any other foundation. It



therefore, astonished him, to find any person could imagine it possible to carry on the Indian government, with the possession of only one of these engines.

If he were inclined to make any observations with respect to the conduct of His Majesty's ministers, it would be this :—with all deference and respect, to them as an individual, they must have been to-blame either in expressing *so strong* an opinion with respect to a continuance of the present system; or in stating *so slightly* that it might be given up, if the Company did not agree with what they had propounded in the last letter from the Earl of Buckinghamshire. They must necessarily be wrong, on one or other of these points. If the system were a good one, it ought not to be overturned from any trifling consideration; if it were not good, so strong an opinion of its excellence ought not to have been expressed.

He could wish to make a few observations on the subject of the difference between the Company and His Majesty's ministers. — Government were of opinion, that the condition they offered on the part of the outports, would not be attended with any material inconvenience; on the part of the Directors, it was contended, that it would be accompanied by very great inconvenience indeed, and it be-



came them to examine both sides of the question, in the way he had stated it, for on this point it was absolutely necessary to make a stand. Now, he was sure that materials existed in that House, to shew that the Indian commerce could not be extended farther than it had been; and any endeavour to extend it further was a most dangerous experiment, which would probably be attended with such disastrous consequences, as should not be hazarded for an object of mere speculation.

He felt extremely sorry, that, in discussing this question, as he wished to do, he was obliged to carry his auditors back to the East; but without doing so, it was impossible for him to discuss the point upon which so much difference existed. They ought, in the first place, to look to India, with a view of enquiring, whether it were possible to find in that country a more extensive market for the manufactures of Great Britain. India was generally stated to have enriched almost every nation who had had any connection with that country; but, in what way that enrichment had taken place, was not so clearly pointed out. There was no doubt of the fact, we found it mentioned even in Scripture: and history informed us that the Tyrians, the Phoenicians, and all the other countries who had a subsequent connection with India,



became wealthy by trading with it. How they obtained their wealth was not, however, stated. It certainly was not by the gold and silver of India, for she had no mines. It was, therefore, probably effected by those commercial nations becoming the carriers for other countries; for it was generally found that those who acted as carriers of merchandise between different kingdoms became rich by this traffic: he believed it might be affirmed, that if India had not absorbed a great part of the precious metals brought from America, they would be far more plenty than they now were. But though India was not possessed of gold or silver mines, yet it had a most fertile and easily cultivated soil; and he conceived that one of the principal foundations of the riches of a country must be the produce of the earth. If food was grown in such plenty that the labour of one person could provide sustenance for four or five, the rest might be employed in manufactures. This he considered to be the case in India: the manufactures were not numerous certainly; but food was so easily procured, the inhabitants could be supported for so little, that they were enabled to manufacture goods at a rate sufficiently cheap to admit a competition with all other establishments. And in the working of cotton, which was one of the manufactures and of the growth of that country, they had arrived at such



perfection, that he was satisfied if a free import, without duties, were permitted, into *this*, they could compete even with our own manufactories, although we had the advantage of those facilities afforded us by the use of machinery: there was a superiority in cotton wrought by the hand, which never could be found in that wrought by machinery; the latter, in carding it, being cut to pieces, the other being drawn out by hand to the whole length of its fibre rendered the India cottons by far the more durable. Thus they saw one of the articles of their manufacture could be produced in such astonishing quantities, as could not be credited, if the moderate price of food was not known.

What else did India possess? She possessed silk, which might be produced to almost any extent, and the East-India Company might assume some credit for attempting to encourage the increase of that commodity as far as possible; as a Director of the East-India Company, he might perhaps entertain one opinion, but as a public man another, and still he thought that, on this point, it might be an exceedingly nice question, whether it would be most advantageous for the nation at large to receive their silk from India or from Italy, if that country were in a state of freedom; and he would tell them the reason,—because



there was no doubt but that the silk of Italy was received as the price of *the manufactures of this country*, and the silk of India, if carried beyond a certain point, could be purchased in no other way than by *gold and silver*.

India also grew indigo, which might be cultivated to an indefinite extent. He had been happy to hear, on a former day, that justice was done, in a certain degree, to the East-India Company, for the encouragement they gave to the propagation of that article; but he did not think that *full* justice was done them, therefore he would venture a few words on the subject. In speaking of the protection afforded by the Company to the Indigo manufacture, there was one material point omitted—it should be made known, that, during the period of the last war in India, during the greatest distresses of the Company, from 50, to £100,000, per ann. were advanced to the indigo merchants, while the Company, for want of funds, were hardly able to carry on the war. The indigo merchants had stated, that they could not proceed unless aid was afforded them, and aid was supplied from the Company's funds, though they could very ill afford to spare it. (*Hear! hear!*)—He confessed, when he had sometimes heard the statements made to the public relative to the conduct of the East-India Company to



wards the Indigo manufacturers, it struck him as having something like the appearance of a dog rising to bite the hand of his master, from whom he had received kindness and protection. (*Hear! hear!*)

Besides indigo, a large quantity of Saltpetre was produced in the East-Indies. This was an article of very great concern at the present time, and one which, he believed, the French were under the necessity of obtaining from us. How they got it, he did not know; but he had reason to suppose that such was the fact. The Company's Indian territories also produced Sugar, Spices, Coffee, Pepper, and Tin,—Porcelain, in the greatest variety, could be procured from China. Copper they did not possess in themselves, but it could be brought at a very cheap rate, from a neighbouring country—Timber also, they possessed in the greatest abundance and of the most perfect quality, and Hemp also. Now, he would ask, what it was possible for a country like this, possessed of such resources, to want from others? They could also manufacture a variety of other articles if they pleased, but they do not want them.

It really had astonished him to hear the language which had been held as to the *surplus produce* of India,—she will grow any thing you want, it is



true, but you must give her in return, gold and silver, for she will take hardly any thing else, and this was proved by the American trade; for you cannot expect, and she will not give you her produce for nothing. The merchants of that country, although they had the world open to them, to select what articles they pleased for the India market, yet they were obliged to purchase their cargoes by the precious metals, with few exceptions, a small quantity indeed of wares and merchandize being taken in exchange. There was no doubt whatever, if you provided gold and silver, that India would furnish almost every description of produce; but it was also as clear, that, in return, she would take nothing from you but the precious metals.—In corroboration of what he had said, and to prove that India had been absorbing all the gold and silver of the world, he had an official paper in his possession, from which it appeared, that £2,997,000, per annum, were paid to that country in bullion, upon the average, of the last seven years—during a period in which this country had found herself reduced to the alternative of attempting to turn our paper into gold and silver, by act of Parliament. If he understood this matter rightly, he believed it was perfectly impracticable for them to find a



vent, ~~on~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~great~~ ~~magnitude~~ for the disposal of their manufactures in India; and standing as a Director of the Company, he should be deserving of the severest censure, if he supported, what he conceived to be a mere delusion,—he did not mean to contend, that those who held a different opinion, did not believe themselves right; but as far as he could judge, from the best information, an extension of the trade to India was not practicable.

There was another point which would decide his mind, if the circumstances he had stated had not sufficiently done so already. Situated as the India Company was at that moment, the remittances required from India, must be so large as to bear down any trade that should be attempted to be carried on in opposition to them.—This remittance must be settled before a trade can exist; and he was stating this in the face of merchants, who knew the fact. The person who wishes to remit had no alternative. He must do it at any price. If, for instance, he lent money on a West India estate, and the proprietor lived in this country, till that money was paid, no trade could exist; *coûte qui coûte*, let the remittance be what it may, it ~~must~~ absolutely be sent. By turning to page 55 of the printed correspondence, and by a reference to what he should



state, the sums that must be paid at the present moment would appear; and he could not resist detaining the Court by making a few comments on the figures, there introduced. The accounts could certainly have been more satisfactorily stated in that paper; but the Company forbore to make any alteration. These accounts were called for by the House of Commons, he believed, without any reference whatever to the renewal of the Charter; and as they had gone forth, the Directors thought it more fair to make use of them, in their present state.

By the statements, in page 56, it would be seen that the whole of the trade brought on an average from India to Europe and America, by the Company, by individuals, and by foreign nations, amounted annually to about £3,800,000. Now, they should look to what the country must receive from India in remittances. In the first place, there was £850,000 for territorial expenses. Perhaps, if they entered very accurately into this item, a discussion might arise, whether some small part of it, ought not rather to be placed to another account; and, therefore, to obviate that, he would reduce it to £800,000. But the Court must feel with him, that if the country paid this sum, no matter in what way, for the Indian territory, that territory must reimburse them in



some manner or other. There was also a large debt due in India, to the amount of twenty or thirty millions, the interest of which was somewhere about fifteen hundred thousand pounds. Now, by the terms on which the loans constituting this debt stood at present, the whole of that interest might be drawn upon the Company by the persons concerned, if they choose to do so; and they had been informed by their servants abroad, that they expected the Company would be called upon for one million per annum. Now this one million, forming part of this debt, if demanded to be paid in England, remittances must be sent from India to meet that demand, whether the exchange was favourable or unfavourable. The next was a sum disbursed annually here, to keep up their military establishment, in stores, cannon, guns, and a variety of other articles, amounting to £300,000. These sums formed a total of £2,100,000, which must be remitted to this country, let that remittance come in whatsoever shape it might. The next was a sum of £500,000, exported by individuals, and which must in a similar way be returned, and could not be carried out in a manner more beneficial to the country; being disposed of in the purchase of a great variety of articles manufactured in England. Yet if that sum went out, it was necessary that it should



come home again. There was also a sum of near £500,000 exported by the captains and officers, to which the same argument would apply. There were a variety of sums arising from the savings of the Company's servants in India from the interest of property belonging to persons in this country but left in India; these might be taken together at the whole a sum of £500,000. There was also a sum sent out by the Company in the shape of trade, which might be about £500,000. The sum sent out in this shape must of course be returned, but evidently could not be more usefully employed for the public. The whole of these items put together amounted to £3,600,000, whereas the amount of the trade was about £3,800,000.

From this sum of £3,600,000, he observed, that, to the amount of £500,000, according to the best of his judgment, the returns might be made from India through China, and here he wished to discharge his mind of a debt of gratitude due to a nobleman of distinguished abilities. He always considered a return of this description from China as a matter of great moment. It was but justice to say, that Mr. Hastings had his eye on it; and that Sir John Macpherson and subsequent governors also attended to it. But it was right that the public should know, that the



matter was ultimately effected by the Marquis Wellesley; to him the country was mainly indebted for procuring returns from India through China to an extent before unknown; and who by that measure prevented this amount from being sent there in bullion which could not now be found. Subtracting this sum, it would reduce the calls they had on India to £3,100,000, whereas the whole amount of trade to every part of America and Europe, as he before observed, was only £3,800,000, which only exceeded the remittance by £700,000, and would only do so by £200,000, if the whole interest of the debt was drawn for. Now, he would ask, was there a possibility of extending the export of manufactures farther, under the circumstances he had stated? and was there not a greater likelihood, that the East-India Company would be reduced to ruin, by throwing open the trade, than that the expectations which had been delusively raised, would be really satisfied?

He now begged permission to make a few cursory observations respecting what had fallen from an hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume), and he hoped he might be allowed to say, that many parts of his speech evinced great ability, though he entirely disapproved of his conclusions. His task was one of great difficulty, but he was sure no man could have performed it in a more able



manner. The hon. Proprietor stated, that a very large increase of trade had taken place in consequence of the facility granted to the private traders in 1793. That was true; still there was a wide difference between stating the truth and the *whole* truth. If he had wished to do justice to that part of the subject, he ought to have shewn, that previous to 1793, a large trade of privilege was carried on by the Captains and Officers of the Company's ships, which was not altered by the regulations of that year; therefore, in describing the amount of the trade at a subsequent period, that part of it which was carried on under the privileges so granted to the officers, ought to have been stated, and they could not come to a certain conclusion on this point, without they knew what proportion of the trade, in that season, belonged to those privileged persons. If it should be found that the privileged trade was greatly decreased; the accession of private-trade ought not to be considered as new, but rather as a transfer from A, to B.—from the captains to the private traders. But, at all events, whether increased or decreased, *it ought* to be taken from this hon. gentleman's calculation. The accounts which the hon. gentleman produced on this point, appeared more calculated to lead them into error, than to direct them to a correct conclu-



sion. He had entered at length into the subject of the detention of the Company's ships in India — this he conceived was unnecessary, because, as it was agreed, on all hands, that the port of London should be placed on a new footing, by permitting private individuals to navigate their ships as they pleased, his observations did not apply to the present subject.

Now, he would endeavour to state shortly what appeared to him to be the jut of the argument between them and His Majesty's Ministers.— They said no material inconvenience would arise to the Company from the opening the trade to the outports—the way in which the matter struck him was this—that all the *ad valorem* duties at present chargeable upon different articles, must be altered, and for this reason, because he thought it was absolutely impossible to retain *them* at the outports, where no means existed to find the value of those articles. Therefore the *ad valorem* duties must be abrogated in those ports, and some other mode substituted. This, he admitted, was a fiscal regulation, but it might, nevertheless, be attended with considerable difficulties, it possibly might cause a rise in duties; from what they had seen, they might rest assured that it would not produce an abatement.

The next consequence would be, that the



Merchants in the city of London must be put on the same footing with those of the Outports; their duties must be the same. *They* would likewise go to the House of Commons and require, not as a boon, but as a right, that if East-India products were sent to the warehouses of private merchants at the Outports, they should also be sent to the warehouses of the merchants of London; and then, the whole of their arrangements with His Majesty's late Government would be totally done away, and the complete destruction of all the plans which had been devised at the India House, for the purpose of collecting and keeping this trade together, must immediately follow.

There was another point which was also worthy of attention. Was it possible to conceive that the trade could be carried on by the Company, and also by the Public, at the same time in different manners? Were the sales to proceed by public outcry at the East-India House, and by individuals in a different way, it must undoubtedly create that confusion which they all united in deprecating. He would not say alterations might not be made judiciously; but a very strong case indeed should be adduced on the other side, to justify the terms which had been offered. With respect to the facility of communication with India, of the dangers to



be apprehended from which, a great deal had been said, he, on his conscience, believed, that it would be attended with most injurious consequences to the interests of the country. He thought the only effectual control that could be devised, for checking improper conduct on the part of the private merchants, would be by compelling them to submit their journals for examination, at the East-India House, or before some other body appointed for that purpose ; otherwise there could be no sort of protection, either for the natives of that country or for the prosperity of this. The dangers to be apprehended from smuggling appeared to him to be very great. The inroad on public duties, he feared, would be most extensive. He might entertain an erroneous idea ; but what would be the situation of the public and of the East-India Company, if it turned out that he was right ? What would be the consequence, if the immense duties on tea should be evaded ? To answer such defalcation, new taxes must be imposed on the shoulders of the people.

The duty on tea he allowed was a tax,—but it was a very easy one,—and if that were impaired some substitute must be thought of, which would probably be felt more severely. They must also recollect this, that the duties on tea could not be broken down, without their profits being broken



down also ; and they were profits absolutely necessary to prevent their whole establishment from being a burden on the Country. Now, if all these mischiefs were likely to arise from the extension of the trade, and from any misapprehension of the subject, Ministers should carry the measure, would not the Ministers themselves and the Country at large have a just right to censure them if they had not plainly and boldly stated all these facts? (*Hear ! hear !*)

He allowed that His Majesty's Ministers were capable of forming an opinion on this question ; but it might in some degree be influenced as theirs might be, either by misapprehension or by Interests. It was the duty of the Company, therefore, to state the true circumstances of the case, broadly and fairly, that the Public might form a judgement on the point in dispute. For his part, he thought the proposition made to them was neither more nor less than an endeavour to run speculation against practice (*hear ! hear !*) ; and so feeling, it was his duty to speak out on the occasion. At the same time, he allowed that he might be mistaken. Still it was his duty to speak his undisguised opinion ; the public might find others wiser, but he was sure they would not find one whose intentions were more honest. If the Court would permit him to allude a



little ludicrously on so grave a subject, he would recall their minds to that period which the heart sometimes delights to be brought back to,—he meant the hours of childhood. Gentlemen might recollect an old riddle sometimes offered to children for their amusement, which he considered not inapplicable to this question, and which he would take the liberty of repeating:

“ Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall,  
 Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall;  
 All the King's horses and all the King's men,  
 Could never put Humpty-Dumpty together again.”

*(Bursts of laughter and applause).* Now if all their establishments should be overturned by this measure—if their warehouses should be rendered useless—if their extensive arrangements should be destroyed—if the large duty now levied on the China trade should be annihilated—if the profit of the East-India Company should be diminished—if the revenue of the country should be seriously injured—if the docks should be dismantled, and the ships dispersed—then we may say,

“ That all the King's horses and all the King's men  
 Will never put Humpty-Dumpty together again.”

*(Laughter and applause).* A house might be pulled down in a single day, but to build one up required a considerable period of time; therefore, he confessed, when he had



seen persons speaking so decidedly in favor of the adoption of this remedy, for evils, which he believed were imaginary, he had felt great surprise ; for it seemed to him much better to try what could be improved in systems already established, than to exchange them for speculation and experiment : the observations which some people had made, that our connection with India was, in truth, an unnecessary one, had not been viewed as it ought. Those who entertained this sentiment believed, that, after the intended change, the Empire would still remain perfect in all its parts, but he was of opinion that the steps about to be adopted were likely to have a very different effect.

The hon. gentleman concluded by stating his thanks to the Proprietors for the attention which they had shewn him. He had avoided professions as much as he could ; for, in his humble apprehension, the characters of men ought to be read in their lives and actions, and not in their professions ; the one might be fallacious, the other could not ; and he hoped that as far as his actions have been developed, he might be permitted to declare, that his heart was his country's—his gratitude belonged to those from whom he had received benefits—and his conscience was between himself and his Maker. *(Loud applause).*



Mr. *Grant* (the Director) said—that in the writings of the executive body, on the subject which now agitated the Proprietors and the public in general, they had stated the dangers of the proposed innovation to be of two kinds; political and commercial. He need not repeat to them the particulars, wherein these several dangers consisted, he would proceed to observe, that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) had fallen in with the opinions of those, who considered the political danger as merely chimerical, and the commercial part to be the only question of real importance. Those gentlemen, who, in the former debate, so well illustrated the dangers of a political nature, as to shew that part of the question to be transcendent, and to absorb the other; had adduced such triumphant arguments, that there was not the least occasion for him to enter on that division of the question; they had also replied to many of his observations of a commercial nature, and particularly an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. R. Jackson) now present, had distinguished himself by his arguments on that occasion, as he had frequently done on others. Mr. Grant thought, however, there was still room for some further remarks. The hon. Proprietor had come prepared with a mass of papers containing the statements of many years,



which no gentleman could foresee, and it was extremely difficult to follow them on hearing them read in Court; but he (Mr. Grant) had endeavoured to collect the matter of them, and as they were statements more immediately calculated to fall in with the prejudices of the present day, they ought to be distinctly met; and that was the task which he had imposed upon himself. (*Hear! Hear!*) A task which, though it was peculiarly unfavorable to a speaker, might be of great use to the cause of truth; and for the sake of that object he was willing to sacrifice his own personal consideration. (*Hear! Hear!*)

The Court would be aware from what he had already said, that he meant to confine himself chiefly to the commercial part of the subject. Two of the most important arguments advanced by the Court of Directors, were, in the first place, "that there can be no material increase in the exportation of the productions of this country, for the consumption of the natives of India, than at present exists;" and, in the next, "that it is not practicable to increase, in any material degree, the vent of Indian productions, in this country." These two positions they had defended in their writings. They had argued, that, from the customs, habits, climate, and



religious prejudices of the natives, and from the state of society amongst them, it was not possible to introduce any general consumption of the manufactures of this country. He referred, for the truth of this assertion, to the experience of past ages. From the time of the Romans to the present day, it had not been found practicable to introduce amongst the inhabitants of Hindostan, articles of European manufacture for general use. Against these declarations of experience, sanctioned by history, and within the knowledge of multitudes belonging to this Company, and acquainted with the Indian world, were produced declarations of a contrary kind, from those who had petitioned parliament, and who had had no connection with the Indian trade. There was no argument in these petitions so common as the practicability of encreasing the export of manufactures to an incalculable extent.

In order that the Court might be able to judge of the species of reasoning urged by the advocates for an open trade, he had abstracted from some of the petitions laid on the table of the House of Commons, certain passages, which he should now, with the permission of the Court, read. The first was from the cutlers of Hallamshire, a district in Yorkshire, who stated, that "the annual exports of our manu-



factures to all the regions of the East scarcely amounted to one fifth of the ordinary exports sent to the United States,"—a people, it must be observed, exactly like ourselves in customs and manners, and totally dissimilar from the natives of India. The petition then goes on, "though the former excēd the latter seven fold in extent, and fifty fold in population, but who have little or no want of our commodities, and as little means of purchasing them." The next petition was from the woollen manufacturers of Wiltshire; persons who had long benefited by the Company's custom, and he was sorry to say this was not the only instance in which those who had grown wealthy under the influence of the Company had turned round and attacked them. These petitioners say, "that they have been prevented by the Company's charter, in a very great degree, from supplying an immense population, and that by a removal of restrictions, they would receive orders for goods infinitely beyond those of the Company." The next was from the merchants of Bradford, an inland town in Yorkshire, who state, that "there are many ~~woollen~~ *woollen* and ~~worsted~~ *worsted* articles, at present unknown in the East, which, through the zeal and enterprize of individuals, might be disposed of in the immense territories



of the north and north-east of India, where there is a great variety of climate, and inhabited by millions of people in almost every stage of civilization ;” and they further stated, that “ China is a peculiar object of their hope.” (*Laughter.*)

The Merchants of Sheffield address the House in a more brilliant strain, and at greater length ; they say, that “ if the trade of this United Kingdom were permitted to flow unimpeded over those extensive, luxuriant, and opulent regions, though it might, at the outset, like a torrent repressed and swollen by obstruction, when its sluices were first opened, break forth with uncontrollable impetuosity, deluging instead of supplying the district before it ; yet that at length the waters of commerce might wear themselves channels, through which they might continue to flow ever afterwards in regular and fertilizing streams.” They also asserted that where *no demand* existed, the enterprising spirit of the merchant could have the effect of *creating it.* (*Loud laughter.*) Now, the speech of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume), from beginning to end, had a tendency to fortify this delusion. He had endeavoured to shew that our exports to India had been largely extended, that the imports from India had also greatly increased, and both might be extended to an indefinite degree. He



wished to have his expression clearly and precisely understood. He did not mean to say that the hon. gentlemen supposed it to be so ; but a delusion did prevail in the minds of the people ; and that was a strong reason with him (Mr. G.) for going into a detailed explanation, for the purpose of invalidating the hon. gentleman's statements and the inferences drawn from them.

First, with respect to the exports ; he had produced a statement of exports by individuals to India since 1793, and he had thence said that from 1798 to 1807 they had increased five fold, for that in 1798 there were eighteen lacks and a half, and in 1807 eighty nine and a half, being an increase in nine years of seventy one lacks, or nearly four fold, and he professed to take this from the report of the external commerce of India, the earlier periods of which were printed. Mr. Grant said he must, in the first place, arraign the accuracy of this statement. The hon. gentleman treated the subject as if there had been a regular progressive rise, but the facts did not bear him out in this assumption. It was a fluctuating trade, sometimes less and sometimes more. The accounts on which he founded his statement for the latest years, were in that house, and ought to be no where else, except with the Board of Control: he knew not, therefore,



where he had access to them, or to some of his other computations; but the Court would perceive, that the most accurate standards were the documents received from the different governments of India. But he had next to observe, that the hon. gentleman's comparison of 1798, and 1807, is founded on imperfect data. The reports of external commerce were begun in Bengal in 1795-6, and in the other governments not till 1802; so that where he spoke of eighteen and a half lacks, in 1798, he referred to Bengal only; while the increase to eighty-nine lacks was the increase of all India. Moreover, the sum of  $18\frac{1}{2}$  lacks began not with 1798, but with 1795-6, and the increase to 89 lacks was in a period of *twelve*, and not of *nine* years. The fact was, that that was an increase of *three and a half*, in *thirteen* years, instead of *five-fold* in *nine* years.\* This commerce also, it must be recollected, consisted of two descriptions—one belonging to the commanders and officers of the Company's ships, the other to the private-traders. The trade carried on by the commanders, existed long before the enlargement in 1793, and was

\* Properly speaking, the *increase* was only, according to Mr. Hume, *four times* the amount of the sum in 1795-6, according to Mr. Grant *two and a half times*.



the only private-trade which was then permitted. The trade carried on by both these parties, amounted, in 1795 6, to 18 lacks; when, therefore, the hon. gentleman began his comparison, as if the enlargement commenced with the opening of the private-trade, he was wrong; for the trade by the commanders was admitted long before it.

And here a material circumstance should be noticed. Till the year 1798, the imports from India were low, on an average about 13 lacks per annum; in that year the warehousing act passed, the imports were 31 lacks, and a considerable change took place in Indian commerce. Any persons were allowed to import, without paying the duties, which were very high; the goods being only warehoused for the purpose of exportation at some future time, and he believed goods were not only imported by our merchants, but a considerable quantity was sent here as to a *dépôt*, by persons not belonging to this country. The whole of this trade, therefore, was much swelled by the warehousing act, and by the share which the Company's commanders and officers had in it. The latter persons did not carry on this trade merely as a matter of profit; but, their pay not being sufficient to meet their expenses, as they could get



goods on credit, and had the freight free of charge, they were enabled to carry out their ventures at a cheaper rate than other merchants could,—and were induced to embark in the trade. Yet he believed these ventures were very often attended with considerable loss. The officers were not in the habit of employing any agents—they did the business entirely themselves,—they got merchandize on credit,—and they had freight for nothing; still, with all these advantages, they were frequently losers. He had known persons go out with goods to the amount of £20,000, and, after paying interest and all charges, not have £1,000 of the adventure at the end of the voyage. The proportion of this export to India, carried on by the commanders and officers was very considerable; and it was by no means to be supposed, that they would resign a great deal of it to the merchants.

But there were other strong reasons to account for the increase in the exports since 1793. The number of the Company's ships had been much augmented, and the commanders of course appointed to them, must still carry out goods. What was still more natural, however, the European population all over India, in the same period, had been increased five-fold, by King's troops, now 20,000, whereas in 1793 they



were but a few regiments, by European settlers, and a large navy ; all which tended to create the demand for articles manufactured in this country. But this was not wholly an increase of consumption, for if those persons had staid in Great Britain, they must have used our manufactures in a considerable proportion. At the outside, the increase had been but *three-and-a-half* since 1793 ; and this, in a great measure, arose from the privilege trade of the commanders and officers which existed before that time, and the great increase of European population.

And now he desired to join issue with the hon. gentleman, and to bring his statement in proof against himself. The hon. gentleman had contended for a large increased export, and certainly the increase was considerable. But was there any proof that they had sent a single new article for the use of the natives of India during that time ? They certainly had not. The articles were mentioned in a book he held in his hand, and, except a moderate quantity of iron, lead, and tin, and the article of cochineal, which was sent to Bombay, and which was not a produce of this country, all the rest were intended for European consumption. He said therefore that those were important documents, and the facts which resulted from them most important,



Here was an 'experiment of twenty years,' with the trade largely opened, and not one new article of consumption for the natives had been introduced : of articles for 'personal use or convenience, either to wear, to ornament, to eat, or to drink, not one has been 'exported to that country for native use. It had been said that diligence, attention, and enterprize, were wanting; and the merchants of Sheffield say, " if they do not *find a demand*, they will *create it* ;" but besides adventurers of this country, he knew there were Europeans in India who had as much knowledge as these gentlemen possessed, and as great an avidity to pursue their own interests, who had not found out any of these new sources of wealth and prosperity. There were besides native merchants who purchased goods from Europe to sell again ; and was it to be supposed, that if they saw, for one moment, any opening for European manufactures, amongst the native inhabitants, that they would not immediately endeavour to supply them? By way of enforcing this topic, he wished to read a report which had been printed, by an officer in that House, and which gave a particular account of the exports from this country to India. It also gave an account of the tonnage appropriated to the private trade, from 1803 4 to 1810. 11



clusive, which appeared to have been 54,000 tons; of this, only 21,800 were made use of by the private merchants; and he had given a list of the most material articles in which that tonnage had been occupied. There were 5,511 tons in wine; beer 2,244; iron 3,000; copper 8,000; oil, spirits, confectionary, preserves, &c. 553. There were also turnery, boots, and shoes, and fifty other trifling articles, all for European consumption, and nothing else; evidently shewing, that there was no article particularly for the use of natives, or differing from what had been sent there before.

Now one strong proof that there had been no great demand of the sort, is, that 54,000 tons of shipping were allowed, and only 21,800 employed. If there had been the least likelihood of procuring a sale for any of the commodities of this country, no man can doubt that more of the tonnage would have been engaged. This was an argument he thought of very great importance. There was an experiment of twenty years—great facility being allowed; yet, during that long period, no one new article of British manufacture for the use of the Indians had been exported to their Eastern territories. The hon. gentleman had mentioned Mr. Colebrook as an authority for his opinion, that the consumption of the



manufactures of this country might be indefinitely extended in India. It had since been stated, truly, that the part of the work to which the hon. gentleman referred, was not the production of Mr. Colebrook, but of a free merchant deceased, and he (Mr. Grant) held the proof of this in his hand on the authority of Mr. Colebrook himself. He then referred to a printed book entitled, "The Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal," published so long ago as 1806; in the preface to which, (though he does not name himself) he writes thus, "the remainder of the original work relates to manufactures and external commerce, and was written by a friend of mine now deceased." It was clear therefore that Mr. Colebrook had disclaimed that part of the work relative to external commerce, no less than six years ago. And he was sorry that his name should be used to give strength and stability to what he must call a delusion. Certainly if a gentleman of his knowledge and experience had come forward and said—"send those manufactures, you will find vent for them in India," it would have staggered him, but he should not have been by any means convinced; for from his residence in that country he was perhaps as well



versed in the subjects connected with their trade and commerce, as Mr. Colebrook. .

The hon. gentleman next had recourse to the trade to China—he states that “ in 1793, that trade amounted in value to £629,000, and that in 1803, it had increased to £1,300,000 ;” thus in ten years doubling its original amount. From thence he infers the practicability of still farther extending the exports of this country. Now the fact was, that the commutation act had not fully developed its powers till after 1793,—but he would say more—the Company had been, for many years, in the habit of exporting woollens (purchased from the Wiltshire manufacturers, and others, from those manufacturers who now attacked them) at a considerable loss. This was not done, as the hon. gentleman might suppose, from commercial ignorance or indifference to loss ; but from a true policy, which taught them to assist the country, by supporting its manufacturers, when they could do it without sustaining a very material loss, and with the hope of continuing a system, from the excellence of which they had seen so many good effects.

The hon. gentleman then stated that he had concluded what he intended to say as to the exports to India, and he hoped after what he had



stated, that there appeared no ground whatever for the declaration which had been so repeatedly made, that they could extend that trade without limitation. On the contrary, he should only observe, that they could not make an alteration without absolutely changing the nature of those people—which he thought must be a very slow process.—And he hoped that this would be a warning to persons wishing to embark their property in a new trade. To look back to an experience of twenty years, to act with caution and circumspection, could do them no harm; and those who listened to the dictates of prudence in this respect, would probably find their account in it. The high freight of the Company had been considered as checking the private trader; but what was to be said of the loss sustained by the captains and officers who paid no freight? This argument was unanswerable.

He next wished to say a few words on the hon. Gentleman's statement with respect to the exports from India; first to this country, and next to America. The hon. gentleman said, "a large increase in the exports took place in 1793, when the trade was opened, and that there was no reason why the exports might not be extended ten times as much." In the printed Sales of the Company, from the year 1793 to 1809-10, the first



article is £181,710, on account of privileged and private traders; which, said the hon. Gentleman, "was increased in 1798 to £881,000; in 1810 to £1,747,000." But it would have been as well if he had gone on with the whole account; and he would have found, that it fell, in 1809-10, to £1,129,000. On this subject he should observe, as he had done before, that the warehousing act had made a very material difference by encouraging imports from India.

He would state, in the next place, that this trade from India was in some degree a forced trade; as the captains and officers were obliged to take a proportion of goods. It was also a remittance trade; a certain quantity of the fortunes made in that country being of necessity to be remitted to this, even at a loss, which circumstances had the effect of forcing a trade. Gentlemen would see the difference between property which individuals were obliged to remit, and that placed in the hands of private merchants, who would consider, before they embarked it, what profit they were likely to make. Those who have fortunes to send home, have not an opportunity of thus considering the matter; they must remit their property, even at a disadvantage: but we should look more narrowly into the subject.

The whole amount of Sales at the India House,



from 1793 to 1809-10, of privileged and private persons, was thirty-two millions. (Mr. Hume here observed, "That was not the statement before the public.") The account, Mr. Grant replied, had been carried to 1811-12. The amount of the sales of the privileged trade was  $23\frac{1}{2}$  millions, and the private trade  $8\frac{1}{2}$  millions, making together 32 millions. Now he had to state that the great cause of increase in these exports from India was, not the opening of the trade in 1793, but arose from the indigo manufacture. And the Company gave permission for the importation of that article in their ships, long previous to 1793; indeed, it existed years and years before that time; and he begged that might be attended to, because it was improper to attribute that to the act of 1793, which was in being before that act was passed. Of the 32 millions of sales, indigo constituted no less than £14,790,000; and, notwithstanding what had already been said on the subject, of that manufacture, he would add a few words more. The Company not only gave the privilege of bringing the article home in their ships, previous to 1793; but to their assistance and support was the success of the manufacture to be ascribed. The culture of this article was introduced in 1783. The Company, and the Company only, purchased it, when it was a losing commodity; and when it was arrived at



more stability, the Company declined the trade and left it to individuals. They went on to the year 1788, still struggling with an incipient business. They then came to the Company's government at Bengal, requesting that relief might be afforded them. He was there at that time, in charge of the Company's commercial affairs, and stated their case to Lord Cornwallis, recommending to his Lordship the propriety of affording protection to this manufacture, as useful to the country, and he agreed to lend them the Company's money, the loan to be repaid from the proceeds of their sale of indigo here, at a fixed exchange. They then went on for ten years further; when (in 1798), soon after the Marquis of Wellesley went to India, they requested a new supply from government, and they got from 50 to £100,000. At this day indigo constituted almost one half of the sales of Indian commodities in Leadenhall-Street; he therefore considered that the sum of fifteen millions, which this article had produced since 1793, was to be ascribed, not to the act passed in that year, but to the previous provisions of the Company.

Another adventitious circumstance favoured this article, and probably without it the manufacture could not have so much prevailed; that was the destruction of St. Domingo, where excellent in-



indigo was produced. The manufacturers there were rivalling those in the East-Indies, and had it not been for the circumstances, which put an end to their industry, it was probable that our indigo manufacture would not have flourished as it had done. Another article, the exportation of which from India had increased very much since the year 1793, was raw cotton. The hon. gentleman had touched particularly on these two commodities, as proofs of the great increase of trade since that period; and from thence he inferred that it might be still farther increased. Now with respect to indigo, they could not enlarge the consumption of that article beyond Europe, the whole of which they at present nearly supplied. It was a compact commodity, which laid in a small compass; and where was the necessity of employing the ships of private merchants to carry it from India to this country, when the ships of the Company were already more than sufficient to bring home what supplied all Europe? (*Hear! hear!*)

With respect to the importation of cotton from India, it was fallacious to think of increasing it. In time of war it costs 10*d.* per lb.; they knew it had been sold at that house far under prime cost and charges,—and it was past doubt, that as



long as the American cotton was introduced into this market, that of India could not compete with it. The Americans were in the habit of supplying one-half of what was manufactured in this country; and when a spirit of hostility was apparent in their acts, it was thought a favourable opportunity to bring home cotton, the growth of our Indian territories. But what was the consequence?—It remained in our warehouses even now. (*Hear!*) When they spoke of trade, it was not enough to state what had been imported, you should also specify whether the articles were sold or not. Now he should state the quantity of cotton and indigo at present lying in the warehouses of the Company, together with the periods they had remained there:

|                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6,600 bales of cotton, | four years in the warehouse, |
| 30,000 ditto           | three years,                 |
| 6,000 ditto            | two years;                   |

altogether 42 600 bales, amounting in value to £560 000, lying unused during that long period in our warehouses.

With respect to indigo, a great quantity of that also remained, part sold and part unsold, in that house. The account was as follows:



|             |                             |     |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| 712 chests, | six years in the warehouse, |     |
| 424 do.     | five years                  | do. |
| 231 do.     | four years                  | do. |
| 5,101 do.   | three years                 | do. |
| 1,593 do.   | two years                   | do. |
| 9,180 do.   | one year                    | do. |

Making a total of 17,211 chests, of the value of £1,178,000. This was the consequence of exports from India; and this was the sort of trade which the hon. gentleman noticed as an encouragement for the people of this country.

The hon. gentleman had not instanced any other article; and from the statements which he now had the honour of laying before the Court, he thought those did not go to the support of his argument. Why should the petitioners for the opening of the trade wish to import a greater quantity of Indian produce than could be consumed by the country? Would you carry the cotton fabrics of India to Glasgow or Manchester? or would you take sugars to Liverpool or Bristol, for the purpose of rivalling your West India colonies, already suffering under the pressure of a glutted market? With respect to the goods imported here, we had also an experiment of twenty years, down to the present time; and no new article had been introduced except two



—indigo and cotton ; of each of which a large portion now remained unsold in their warehouses. What, then, was the encouragement to embark in this trade between Europe and India? and what must be thought of those who would advise others to sink their capital in a speculation likely to end so ruinously for them?

The hon. gentleman had descanted largely on the trade of the Americans with India, as a proof of the practicability of extending the trade at home, and of the impolicy of their monopoly. In the first place, if it were monopoly to admit a neutral nation to the trade with India, why had he charged the East-India Company with it? (Here Mr. Hume motioned dissent.) Whether the hon. gent. meant to do so or not, he must ask if his speech, going out to the country, would not lead the people to impute blame to the Company? But it was not *their* act, it was not *their* fault. *They* were not parties to the treaty of 1794, by which the Americans were admitted to this trade; nor to the act of Parliament of 1797 which admitted all neutrals to it. They had done all in their power to check the abuse of the American privileges in the trade between America and India as soon as they could do so. When the term of the treaty expired, they had obtained the consent of his Majesty's Government to



lay additional duties on the exportation of East-India produce to America, and other neutral countries. (*Hear ! hear !*)

With respect to the policy of granting such a liberty to the Americans, there was more to be said for it than might now on first sight appear, and the Government ought not to be censured, on that account, beyond what was proper. When the Americans first appeared in the India seas about 1785, it was a time of peace. Other European nations had settlements in India, by grants from the native sovereigns recognized by us after we obtained territorial dominion. It was then held that those settlements had the power of receiving other European flags into their ports, though the Company now maintain that the grant was intended only for themselves. The import of them indeed he conceived, was, "You have a privilege to carry on trade with your own country, but not to extend the same privilege to other states."—The question with our government then was, whether the Americans should go to the French or Dutch settlements, or be allowed to come to our ports, and purchase from us? The latter policy was adopted.—This, however, was not thought of at the time; and at the commencement, in a time of peace, no



inconvenience was perceived. But the long war which followed the French revolution, gave a new and increased importance to the privileges that had been conceded to the Americans by the treaty of 1794. Their neutral character gave them a safety we could not enjoy, they navigated cheaper, more expeditiously, and were received into the ports of foreign Europe and Spanish America, where, on account of the war, our ships could not go, nor our consignments find admission even circuitously. They also abused the terms of the treaty. It gave them only a *direct* trade between India and America, but their ships visited all the ports of Europe going and coming. At first they benefitted by the rise of British capital, partly that which was to be remitted from India, and partly what was lent them in Europe, but afterwards they were able to trade chiefly on their own, and certainly acquired wealth and importance by that trade. But all was essentially owing to their neutral character, and this in fact enabled them to carry on a trade certainly beneficial to India which we could not carry on ourselves. The hon. gentleman therefore, in declaiming on this trade, had been essentially wanting in not adverting to the true cause of its great extent, the neutral character of



the Americans, which enabled them to do what, had they been out of the way, our merchants could not have done even circuitously.

Mr. Grant then proceeded to examine what the increase of the American trade had been; he thought the hon. gent. (Mr. Hume) was inaccurate also, in his statement of that trade, though he professed to take his figures from the India reports, on external commerce; he had selected those years which were best suited to his purpose, whence he says, that, "in 1799-10 the American exports from India, amounted to nineteen lacks, and in 1809 to 95 lacks; being a *five fold* increase in *nine* years." Now, the fact was, that in 1795-6. the American exports were 19 lacks, and, in 1808 9, only 69 lacks; the increase therefore, in *thirteen* years, was in a ratio of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , instead of *five*, in *nine* years. The trade of the Americans with India was further encouraged by the British Government then, because they carried hardly one thing into that country but *bullion*, which was much wanted there. And this was a farther proof of the difficulty of introducing manufactures amongst the natives; for the Americans, who were under no restrictions, carried only a small quantity of wines and trifling wares, but the rest of their Indian cargoes was paid for in bullion. The whole increase of the American



trade, since the revolutionary war, had been 50 lacks per annum. But it was material in considering this increase, to recollect, that during the same period, the trade between India and foreign Europe had declined ; and we were not to suppose, because the American exports had become greater, that the exports from India to the western world, this country excepted, had, on the whole, been much raised.—On the contrary, he would venture to assert this position, that the exports from India, to foreign Europe, that is, to all the western world, except Britain, are not now greater than they were forty years ago, when the trade in those exports was in the hands of the French, Dutch, and Danish Companies.—(*Hear ! Hear !*)

And he could refer to documents within that House to prove, that the exports in 1768, to foreign Europe, by the French, Dutch, and Danish Companies, were as great as the exports from India to foreign Europe and America were at present. The hon. gent. appeared to shew some signs of surprize at this, but he would take the liberty to state, that he was warranted in what he said, and had indeed been in India at the time.

Mr. *Hume* said, that it was from the year 1793 that he took his data ; he certainly was surprised



that the hon. Director should have introduced the year 1768.

Mr. *Grant* continued,—that he had stated this circumstance, merely as a relative observation, illustrating the question now before the Court. He could not mean to mix the transactions of 1768 with the immediate subject in discussion; but he wanted to shew, that the consumption of Indian commodities in the Western world did not progressively advance in the manner which it was the scope of the hon. gentleman's argument to maintain was to be expected. The Indian commodities were chiefly luxuries in the Western world, and the consumption of them must depend on the wealth of the buyers, and be also subject to those fluctuations of market occasioned by particular events. The reason the Americans carried on this trade to the amount they did, was, as already noticed, because they had the South American market entirely to themselves. Besides this, the great extent of America, and the increase, since 1793, of her population and wealth (for wealth was always the consequence of an industrious population), would still farther account for her having embarked so largely in the Indian trade.

The hon. gent. had then touched on another topic. He had said, that the result of the Com-



pany's Indian trade was, that they carried it on to a loss; and the hon. gentleman had quoted on this point, the supplement of the Exposition of the Court of Directors laid before the House of Commons. Now he must complain of the hon. gentleman's want of candour in making this quotation. He had selected one or two years of loss, but had omitted to quote preceding and subsequent years, in which a profit appeared. The supplement to the Exposition laid before that House in 1810, shewed, that though a loss was sustained on the sales, two different years, yet in the following year, 1809-10, there was a profit of £130,754; and in the two following years still more. The whole of the profits from the Company's trade to India, from 1798-9 to 1811-12, was £3,898,000. The loss £750,302, which left £2,439,000, from which deducting loss by ships foundering, £884,675, and the profit upon fourteen years, with all these deductions, was £1,554,000, which was about £111,000 per annum. The hon. gent. perhaps would object, that this account was not accurate, because the duties were not charged on it. It was true the Indian duties, which had fluctuated from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, were not charged, but the home duties were. This, of course, made an alteration in the profit. It was also true he,



Mr. Grant, had said, on a former occasion, that the Company did not attach any great importance to this Indian trade. This was spoken of it commercially. But they considered it to be of great moment, as constituting a part of the Indian system; as one of the great links of that system, of which, if they were deprived, the whole chain would be broken. (*Hear, hear!*) This was a sufficient answer to the argument of the hon. gent. that they ought to resign a trade which brought them nothing, even were it true that it yielded no gain.

He (Mr. Grant), on the contrary, maintained they ought not to resign it; for, by keeping it in their own hands, they were assisted in performing the functions of the political government, and in upholding that establishment, for the preservation of which they were then struggling against so many unfounded prejudices. When they were called upon to resign that, he conceived they were asked to resign a great deal more than the trade; they were, in fact, called upon to resign the system of Indian political administration. Every considerate and reflecting man must hope with him, that they might succeed in this contest; for he had heard of no argument on the other side of the question sufficient to induce any change that would at all en-



danger that system. He meant not to censure the hon. gentleman for the part which he had chosen to take on this occasion; but he had to complain of his introducing topics quite inapplicable at the present period. He thought the hon. gentleman ought not to have revived all the controversies which had occurred between different bodies and the Company for the last twenty years. Those disputes were now past, and no good whatever could be effected by reverting to them. The interests which occasioned these controversies were now merged in a greater interest, which was common both to the Company and to the other parties. They now had a common object, and allusions to past differences could be of use only in reviving feelings of irritation and dissension. (*Hear! Hear!*)

As the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume) referred to various opinions upon the question before the Court, and had particularly quoted that of the Marquis Wellesley, he also would beg leave to read an extract from a letter of that noble Lord. When he mentioned the name of that nobleman, on whose character so much eulogium had been pronounced, he wished to avoid every thing that did not bear on the present discussion, or that had any relation to differences of political opinion; but as others had taken occasion to advert



to their opinions on certain past transactions, he felt himself bound to say, that he had seen no reason to change any opinion he might have formerly expressed, either political or commercial, respecting these transactions. He then read the following extract of a letter written by the Marquis Wellesley, dated December 30, 1800, which was most decidedly in favour of the Company's rights.

“ It would be equally unjust and impolitic, to extend any facility to the trade of the British Merchants in India, by sacrificing or hazarding the Company's rights or privileges, by injuring its commercial interests, by admitting an indiscriminate and unrestrained commercial intercourse between India and England, or by departing from any of the fundamental principles of policy, which now govern the British establishments in India.”

The hon. gentleman, continued Mr. G. has argued, that the intention of the Act of 1793, for enlarging the private trade has not been answered. This he must certainly deny. Whether it was proper to enlarge the trade further, was a distinct question, but he was quite sure that the Act of 1793 was not intended to go so far as the hon. gentleman seems inclined to think. He knew something of the proceedings which then



took place; and he could say, with certainty, that the minister of that day had no idea of carrying the enlargement afterwards to the length to which it had gone. He (Mr. G.) was then friendly to the extension first proposed; because it had for its immediate object to bring to this country by legitimate channels the Indian fortunes, which were then remitted by means of an illicit trade to foreign Europe, a trade hurtful to the interest of the nation and to the morals of the Company's servants. But he must now acknowledge that he would have been much more guarded, had he foreseen the uses that would be made of that first enlargement. He mentioned them then as the hon. gentleman had adverted to the past disputes about the intention of the act of 1793, certainly without necessity, as the Company had since gone far beyond any thing stipulated at that time, and the revival of such questions now could only have the effect of placing the Company in an invidious light with the public, and of sowing the seeds of dissension between parties now united in a common interest.

The hon. gentleman, Mr. G. went on to observe, had treated the whole subject under consideration, merely as a commercial one; but, after long acquaintance with it, he must assert that it was one whose *political*, was infinitely greater



than its *commercial* importance, as it involved the vital interests of the Indian Empire, and the security of the constitution of this country. This ought never to have been forgotten even in discussing the commercial part of the subject.

With respect to the question now at issue between the Government of the Company coming soberly to it, he thought that if any thing ever was made out clearly, it was this, that no rational hope could be entertained of a material increase of the consumption of East-India goods in the western world; nor, on the other hand, of European manufactures in the Eastern Empire.

Now, if they could satisfy the petitioners and the public of this; if those reasonings on which the Company had proceeded in the support of the present system were solidly established; if the truth which had appeared from the statements this day appealed to were generally known; might it not be hoped that the mistaken zeal of those who seemed to be actuated by the desire of hunting down the Company might abate, and that sober dispassionate men might be convinced? With respect to the leaders, indeed, in the attack upon the Company, he feared not—for when men had once set out with feelings of prejudice, and had become heated in the pursuit of



an object, it was extremely difficult to bring them back to impartial reason and reflection—with the principal persons who had taken the lead in procuring petitions against the Company's Charter, from the different towns, it would probably be vain to argue; but it was for the merchants, who were speculating to send out their property to India—it was for them calmly to consider, whether the intended opening could by any means produce the expected benefits; and if not, he would ask them, why they should be so anxious to pull down an ancient and a venerable fabric, which had taken ages to erect? what interest would this serve? what beneficial object would it produce? (*Hear ! hear !*)

He wished that this question might be soberly and coolly considered by ministers themselves; though he feared they had advanced so far that it was difficult for them to extricate themselves out of the business, even if they wished it. He could not conceive that their individual opinions favoured the opening of the outports—Lord Melville had been clearly against it. The Earl of Buckinghamshire had not said that he was for it. He had indeed said little of his own sentiments, or of those of ministers; but he had referred them, the Directors, to the opinions of the petitioners, as contained in their addresses. They



had heard some extracts from them read, and would judge whether they contained arguments by which the national decision should be guided? It did not even appear that His Majesty's ministers, entertained any steady decided conviction of the propriety of opening the outports, he certainly wished they might farther consider that important point, for in short, the question, as to the Company, came now to be whether they were to be sacrificed to the unreasonable clamours which had been raised by manufacturers and merchants? For his own part conceiving that the arguments of the Company were founded in reason, justice, and policy, he hoped the Proprietors would stand firm on the ground they had taken, and that they should be supported by the good sense of the nation at large, and by the decision of a wise and enlightened Parliament.—(*This speech was received with every demonstration of applause*)

Mr. Morris said, that he rose for the purpose of stating a fact, which would tend to prove the danger of sending out Europeans to India indiscriminately. Transcendant abilities had been shewn in forming that system by which the security of all their possessions in the East were preserved, and which, if this measure took place, would be utterly overthrown. The hon.



gentleman himself (Mr. Hume) had spoken in the highest terms of the Indian government, as founded on the most equitable principles; dispensing justice with perfect equality, and maintaining the rights and interests of all. He had strengthened that statement by quoting a case, in which the property of a native was protected, and the full measure of justice was dealt out to the offender who had transgressed the law. Now he would call his attention to another fact, —a fact of a different description—of a more melancholy nature. A private trader in India had ill-treated and oppressed the natives,—they did not wait for the slow process of the law,—they did not take their oppressor before a police magistrate,—no,—they rose in a body and massacred Mr. Martin, for that was the gentleman's name. If an unlimited intercourse with India was admitted, might we not expect similar events? might we not suppose that instances of oppression, on one side, and of summary punishment on the other, would frequently take place? He hoped the hon. gentleman would not forget that India was a conquest. He hoped he would not forget that the two ingredients of which all governments were composed are fear and hope. He trusted he would recollect that the Company's government in India rested on the *fulcrum* of



opinion, and that, in all cases, the *many* must be governed by the *few*. He hoped he had made some impression on the hon. gentleman; yet he ought perhaps to beg pardon for having said so much, when the subject had been already so luminously treated by others.

Mr. Twining said, there were probably many gentlemen in the room who recollected that, on a former occasion, when the charter was renewed in 1793, he bore some part in that discussion, and he should not have conceived that he performed his duty, after the peculiar obligations which he had received from the Proprietors, who had placed him behind the bar, if he were to remain totally silent in the present arduous and difficult situation of the Company; he should therefore make a very few remarks on the negotiation which took place in 1793, and on that which was recently discontinued by His Majesty's Ministers. In addressing them on this topic, it was evident that he need not go into any length of argument; because the situation of the Company had been so ably advocated on that side of the bar, and, he might say, so eloquently urged on the other, as to render it unnecessary for him to take up much of their time. The important lesson which he had learned in the negotiation of 1793, was this,—it was then ac-



knowledge, by such wisdom as that time produced, that it was better to trust to experience than to hazard the safety of India by chimerical experiments. It was not with the view of merely benefiting that Company, but for the good of the Country at large, that it was then deemed most expedient for them to retain the Territories, and possess the commercial power of the Indian empire, subject to such regulations and arrangements as might be considered necessary. These were the sentiments of the late Lord Melville, who, it was well known, employed his powerful mind for a great number of years on the subject of Indian affairs; and he delivered this opinion, after having maturely weighed the different plans which had been submitted for the government of the Indo-British territories. Now he might be accused as, a *laudatur temporis acti*, but he did not think the wisest men of the present day would increase their reputation for wisdom, by rejecting the sagacity and discernment which were displayed by Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville at that period. He knew it was not very pleasant to read extracts from books in public meetings; he would, however, with the indulgence of the Court, read one or two, in the hope that they might not be overlooked in Parliament. Whatever motion might be originated in either



house; on the subject of the East-India Company's charter, he trusted that those who occupied seats in Parliament, and who at present stood in opposition to them, would feel an inclination to be made acquainted with those opinions which were delivered in 1793 by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. [*The hon. Director then read extracts from the correspondence which took place in 1793, containing the sentiments of Mr. Pitt and Mr. DUNDAS, which were distinctly in favour of the Indian system, as it did then and does now exist: vide Appendix.*]

Now (continued Mr. Twining) after such opinions, from such high authority, it could not be without the deepest concern that they saw attempts made in direct contradiction to them. The rights and interests of the Company had been so ably advocated, that he would not trespass on their time by expatiating on them at length. One remark, however, he wished to make, on what had been said with respect to the great increase in the trade to China. He believed the hon. gent. who made the observation, had not taken into the account, the difference which arose from the variations of price, in the articles imported; but he thought he would find that a great part of the apparent increase of the trade, was occasioned, not by an increased quantity of goods imported, but by a



higher value being placed upon them. He knew not whether, if the new measure should really take place, and if they should have to *give up* the Indian trade, or rather, if it should be *taken from them* (for they never could surrender it) ; he said, he knew not whether they should most have to lament, the *success* or *failure* of the Outports. For, if the plan succeeded, it would be only because a proportion of their trade was transferred from the Company to them ; and if it did not, they had recent instances to prove, that the failure would not be supposed to have arisen from the foolish speculations of the merchants themselves, but because there was something yet to give ; and they would never be satisfied, till the Company had, by degrees, relinquished every thing they possessed ; but, long before that day arrived, the fabric would have fallen to the ground, and the whole territory and commerce of India would have been lost to the Country. It would then be little consolation for posterity to know, that the Company exposed the impolicy of the scheme ; that their representations were not attended to ; and that they were sacrificed to what he must call, popular clamour.

He would also bestow a few words on the ~~speech~~ of the hon. gent. (Mr. Hume) ; they ~~would~~ indeed be but few ; for most of the argu-



ments adduced by him had been already so fully answered, that he should not be justified in taking up any great portion of their time. He had listened with much attention to the whole of the hon. gentleman's speech, and to some parts of it, with considerable satisfaction. He did not dislike a man because his opinion was different from his own. If an individual stated his sentiments in a proper way—though they might be at variance with his ideas on the subject, yet he thought his claim to attention was indubitable—and he confessed the way in which the hon. gent. took the solitary ground he had chosen, evinced considerable ability. Approving of his conduct so far, if He thought they were all mistaken, and conceived that He knew better, what was for the good of the Company and the Country, than they did themselves, he certainly had a right to come forward and state his sentiments. But if, after what he had heard, he should advise the Court, rather to follow his single opinion, than that of the Proprietors at large, and those who were now in the Direction, and could recommend what had been properly designated a frightful hazard, instead of the existing system, then he thought some considerable degree of censure might fairly be attached to him. The hon. gent. had observed, that the conduct of the Court of Directors implied



a defiance to the Government—he denied the assertion. On this occasion he was certain he was speaking the sentiments of the whole Court of Directors, and he must say, nothing was farther from their intention than the manifestation of defiance. But, when opinions were disagreeable to a party, that party was apt to disapprove of every step taken by their opponents. Now, when it was discovered that the sentiments of the Directors were unanimous on this subject—when they found that it would be impossible to agree to that measure which his Majesty's Ministers had proposed.—He should say, that if, under such circumstances, the plan should be defeated, and they withheld the expression of their opinions from these Ministers, would they not, on some future occasion, take an opportunity of observing, “if you had known the Court of Directors, with whom we were treating to be unanimous in their opinion that it would be improper to recommend to the Court of Proprietors to accede to our proposition, was it not your duty to communicate that fact to us, and not suffer us to proceed in the discussion of a point which would not ultimately be conceded?”

In pursuing the course which they had taken, therefore, no candid mind can for one moment imagine that they were actuated by a spirit of de-



fiatcé. The hon. gent. had said the India trade was not worth holding, because it was a trade of loss.—He spoke before a Company of merchants, and he asked, if, even in carrying on an ordinary trade, it might not sometimes be necessary, for a certain time, to retail that which was known to be a source of loss—and why? Not because the trader loves a loss—but, because, if he abandoned the article which produces that partial loss, he may, in consequence, forfeit a very great profit hereafter. Now, if that were the case, in a commercial concern, what should we say to the East-India Company, whose extension of this trade was in no point of view unconnected with the political state of the Indian empire? If they were to give up that trade, which occasionally caused a loss, the interest of the East-India Company would follow it, and, therefore, independent of every other argument, the political considerations were sufficient to induce them to retain it.

The hon. gent. had laid some stress on the report of an opinion given to him by a Commissioner of the revenue, who was said to have observed, that there was more smuggling carried on in the River Thames than any where else in England. As far as regards the India and China trade, it was no wonder that there should be more



smuggling than in those places where the products of the East did not and could not come. There had been occasions, in which ships had gone to other parts of the coast, and even to Bristol, but never without there being a manifest additional degree of smuggling, and it was indeed supposed by some, that they went there for that purpose.—What did this prove, except that the Outports afforded additional opportunities of smuggling?—And what was the case in the port of London? Every Captain and Officer received positive injunctions to avoid illicit trade: When the ship arrived in the River, the Company immediately sent out surveyors and inspectors—and an account of all the transactions on board the ships was regularly sent to the India House. But he knew that even all this precaution did not answer the end which was intended. And what would be the consequence, if the trade was opened? Instead of all this care and attention, ships would be hourly arriving in this country, the owners of which, instead of preventing, would be interested in forwarding the illicit trade—and many, perhaps, look alone to that for a profitable return. He could scarcely suspect that a more powerful argument would be given to him, in support of the assertion, that the admission of the import trade to the outports must produce a defalcation



of the revenue than that which the hon. gent. had adduced. In addition, however, to this, he had also the opinion of a Commissioner of the Revenue, somewhat different from that quoted by the hon. Proprietor; for it expressly asserted, that if ships were permitted to go within the landing places of every port here, and in Ireland, smuggling would increase to an enormous degree.

They were now in a situation, in which no Court of Proprietors, since he had the honour of being connected with the Company, had ever been placed.—They had had their difficulties and their contests, but they were of little moment compared with the present struggle. They were now contending for their existence—they were now combating for life itself. (*Hear! hear!*)

The interests of the Company would never be abandoned by the Court of which he was a member. If, however, the Court of Proprietors should wish to surrender them, they should feel it their duty, however reluctantly, to obey their command; but he hoped another duty would devolve upon them, and one of a far more pleasant nature. He did not, it is true, like hostility; he would do any thing, short of a sacrifice of duty, to avoid it; but, if it were the opinion of the Court, that they should resist the power, that which had been made to them, they shitted, by



in mind, that, on a former occasion, a powerful administration was overturned by the firmness and unanimity of the Company, exerted in defence of their dearest rights and privileges. *(Hear! hear!)*

Mr. *Randle Jackson* said, It had been suggested to him, that, at the last meeting of the Court, he did not state the sentiments of Mr. Fox on the subject of the East-India Company's privileges. He referred at that time to the opinions of Mr. Pitt and the late and present Lord Melville, &c.; from the lateness of the hour indeed he certainly had omitted to cite the opinion of Mr. Fox.—That right hon. gent. proposed to make a material alteration in the Company's establishment, with what ulterior views did not appear. The principal feature in the new system which he advocated was the appointment by Government, of seven or eight commercial functionaries, and other officers; but still it was manifest, that he had not in any way contemplated the abandonment of those fundamental principles on which the system of the Company was built. Mr. Fox's declared opinion was, that "if ever the Government took the territorial possessions into their hands, it would be absolutely necessary that the trade should be carried on by a trade to al Company, without which, the revenue



ues could not be made available to the interests of the empire." Thus contending for this proposition—that however the ~~functionaries might~~ be altered, the grand principle, that the ~~revenue~~ should only be collected through a Company, should remain in full and unimpaired force. Much dependance had been placed on the opinion of the Commissioners of Excise, but it was worthy of deep remark, that the ~~government~~ for their own purposes, had most disingenuously insinuated (for the fact would not at all bear them out) that they had met them solely on the efficiency of the measures intended to be adopted for the prevention of smuggling; but this was only part of the question. Their assertion was, "if you destroy us you destroy your revenue;" this, it was true, was a great political question, without looking to other points, any one of which might produce almost equal danger. All these points however were open for discussion; but as the Ministers had thought proper to take issue on the efficacy of their measures for preventing smuggling, and as the hon. gentleman had bottomed himself on the report of the Commissioners, he hoped he should be allowed to read one passage from that document. At the same time, it was worthy of recollection, that where a string of questions was submitted by



government to a Board of Commissioners, the answer, whether favourable or not, was always given in the most *complaisant* manner possible; and, notwithstanding what the Commissioners said in this report, he thought it might be inferred, even from their own statements, that they themselves were alarmed to the heart with apprehensions of the increased danger of smuggling, under the proposed system. They recommended "the trade to be confined, the private trader's ships to be reduced in size, and guarded by revenue cruizers, for which purpose it would be necessary that that species of force be increased." (*A laugh*.) They pointed out the ports of "Liverpool, Bristol, Plymouth, Dover, and Hull," as those to which they conceived the trade should be restricted. He read this statement, that it should go out to the public, while there was a show, on the part of government of fighting the battle of the Outports at large, these Commissioners of Excise and Customs, only recommended the trade to be extended to four or five of them, expressly advising, "that none of the ships shall go into ports where it is likely facilities will be afforded to smuggling."—Now, hear the description given by the Commissioners of the port of Liverpool. "The entrance to the harbour of LIVERPOOL, to the West, is open, and



nothing can be better calculated for smuggling—(Laughter)—and the docks, as they are at present constituted, being surrounded with shops, warehouses, and public houses, afford additional facilities to illicit traffic. (Laughter.) It is in contemplation, however, to build one dock, which should be surrounded by walls.

The Commissioners then go on to shew, that the other ports are even worse than Liverpool, (a laugh) and yet this was the report on which the hon. gentleman founded his argument, and on which the government formed their opinion. He was clear, in the language of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, that unless very extensive guards and regulations were provided, illicit traffic would increase in an alarming degree. He knew not what regulations were intended to be adopted, but it struck him that nothing could be done, except a fresh army of revenue officers and an additional fleet of Custom House cruizers, were added to the general burdens of the state—(laughter)—which was rendered unnecessary by the mode in which the revenue was at present collected.

Sir Hugh Inglis stated, that when the Court was about to adjourn the other evening, the hon. mover of the resolution (Mr. Weyland) seemed to insinuate an opinion, that the hon. Proprietor



who proposed the amendment was entitled to a reply. He then took the liberty of stating, that, if he were allowed to speak a second time, it would be in consequence of their courtesy; for, by the rules of debate, established in other assemblies, no person was suffered to exercise that freedom, except the mover of the original question. He for one, however, would very willingly give any indulgence to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume), if he wished to speak in explanation.

If the Court granted that permission, he trusted the hon. gentleman would not go into such a great length of detail, as he had done on a former evening. The time of the Court was precious, it was assembled for particular purposes; and as Parliament would soon meet, it was necessary that they should speedily come to a decision; therefore, he hoped the hon. mover of the amendment would compress what he had to say into as short a compass as possible.

Mr. Hume acknowledged himself fully sensible of the indulgence the Court had extended to him, and highly grateful for the opportunity, which they had given, of making such observations as occurred to him, in reply to what had been said from those gentlemen, who had risen with the avowed intention of answering his arguments. When,



however, personal charges and individual accusations were directed against him, and when attempts were made to refute all his statements, he thought it would not be liberal or candid to have refused him an opportunity, which, under such circumstances, every man had a right to demand. He was notwithstanding grateful for the permission; and he should think he acted with much impropriety if he occupied their time longer than he found it absolutely necessary. One thing he would observe, that if he, standing alone, had spoken at great length, it was but justice to say, his adversaries had so regulated their conduct, as to place *numbers* in opposition to *quantity*. If a single individual had refuted his arguments, he would not again have addressed them; particularly after the numerous and witty remarks which the prolixity of his former speech had called forth.

He should strictly confine himself, in the course of his explanation, to those points which he conceived essential; and he would begin with the last speaker first. The hon. gentleman (Mr. R. Jackson) in explanation, called the particular notice of the Court, to the opinion of the Commissioners of Customs and Excise, as if he conceived that he (Mr. Hume) had founded his principal reason for opening the outports, on an opinion, that no in-



crease of smuggling, and consequently no decrease of the revenue, would take place. It was evident from this that he had failed in explaining himself; for, though that was a strong ground of argument, he thought he had adduced others no less powerful. It had been asserted, and powerfully too, that he pertinaciously clung to his own opinion against the statements of the twenty-four Directors—presumptuous would it be for him to stand up in that Court, in opposition to the sage experience and wise discretion of those gentlemen. He had argued, that no defalcation would take place in the revenue, and no mischief would happen to the country, and to strengthen that, he had only quoted the opinion of a Commissioner.—He had disclaimed, and would again disclaim, the smallest intention of making any assertion founded only on his own opinion. His arguments were built, on facts, and stood firm and unshaken, in defiance of all the attempts which had been made to impugn his motives. If his statements had been found weak or inconclusive, he would have been the first man to acknowledge it. Such, being the case, it could not be said that he had placed his opinion *alone* against that of the Directors. The Commissioner, in fact, of whom he had spoken, had made use of the very words of his Majesty's Ministers, that,



“ after the best examination, aided by all the information obtained from the Boards of Customs and Excise they are not enabled to concur in the opinion that the proposed extension of the import trade from India, would be productive of any very great increase of smuggling, and certainly not to the extent stated by the Directors.” This was not a rash opinion, but the result of the united experience of those two boards; and he did not believe that gentlemen connected with them, could be biassed, by any means whatever, to give an opinion, in opposition to their real sentiments, with the view of meeting, what had been termed, the dangerous and hazardous measures of his Majesty’s Ministers. If, therefore, these gentlemen were actuated by a desire to benefit the Country, as he was convinced they were, ought not the Court to pay great deference to their opinions, which were only echoed by his Majesty’s Ministers? Having said thus much, he wished to dismiss all further remarks on the subject of smuggling, and to confine himself to the propriety of extending the trade to the Outports; for placing full reliance on these facts, he could see no risk to the revenue by such a measure, under such wise and effectual regulations, as the legislature might think proper to make. As he had advanced facts, and only



facts, he was very happy to find that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Grant) had attempted to grapple with them ; but all that he had advanced had served only to support his (Mr. Hume's) arguments ; and he hoped they would recollect the observation of an hon. gentleman (Mr. Jackson), that if his statements were not refuted, he would leave the Court with " vantage ground."—His statements had *not* been refuted, and, therefore, he had a right to congratulate himself on being in the situation to which the hon. gentleman alluded. The hon. Director (Mr. Grant) had said, that neither the imports from India to this country, nor the exports from this country to India, could be extended ; this was at variance with every fact which he (Mr. Hume) had adduced.

*Mr. C. Grant* said, that to prevent any farther mistake, he would repeat what he had always stated, that " they could not be increased *in any material degree.*"

*Mr. Pattison* spoke to order. He said the hon. gentleman had not confined himself to explanation ; he hoped the worthy Chairman would keep him to a strict line, and save the Court from that diffuse course of reasoning, which, on a former occasion, occupied three hours and a half. He did not know how the patience of other gen-



tllemen stood the test ; but his was very severely tried.

*Sir Hugh Inglis* thought it was better to let the hon. gentleman go on in his own way ; they would save time by it.

*Mr. Hume* continued ;—he should feel very happy in being called to order, if, in any one point he had transgressed ; but if he were not allowed to make the necessary statements, how could he refute the arguments which had been adduced against him ?

*The Rev. Mr. Thirlwall* submitted to the Court, that the hon. Proprietor was very disorderly. It was stated by the hon. Chairman, that he was to confine himself solely to explanation ; and he contended that the line of argument, which he was then pursuing, was by no means explanatory. On a former evening they had the hon. gentleman's speech of nearly four hours ; and, according to the course he was at present taking, the reverend gentleman apprehended, that his address would be extended to eight. He wished the sense of the Court to be taken on the business.

*Sir Hugh Inglis* wished the hon. Proprietor to proceed ; at the same time, he hoped he would compress as much as possible, what he had farther to offer.

*Mr. Hume* continued ;—if to explain was re-



gular, he denied that he was irregular in any observation that had fallen from him. The hon. Director (Mr. Grant) had stated, that the exports from this country to India, could not be extended in any material degree. Of the statement which he made, to prevent mistakes, he handed a written copy to the Court of Directors, in which the increase of the whole of the Indian trade, for the last eighteen years, was specified. He had taken the general items, instead of the increase at the port; the difference was, that instead of an average of 89<sup>ths</sup>, he should have given an average of 65, being only a three-fold increase. This still proved the truth of his argument, though not, he confessed, in so great a degree as he had stated. He should have felt happy, if the hon. gentleman (Mr. Grant) had corrected a mistake which he had made in another respect. He alluded to the exports from Bengal, to America, which he had stated at 85; when, in 1806, he should have stated them at 95; he had here got below the mark, and it would have been but candid, if the hon. gentleman had corrected him there, as he had done when he got above it. At all events, it was proved that an increase had taken place. He denied his ever having stated that the trade might be increased to an indefinite degree, although he did say that it was capable



of very great improvement. It was not known, however, to the nation at large, that the Company did almost every thing in their power to check the introduction of our manufactures into India. Very high duties were obliged to be paid, before European goods were allowed to be landed at Calcutta; some paid  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; woollens  $26\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; carpets  $9\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, and so on in the same proportion.

On a former day he had adduced the opinion of Mr. Colebrook, in support of his reasoning; and it would be recollected, that a gentleman had got up, with great warmth, and stated, that the work which he quoted, was not the production *alone* of Mr. Colebrook, but a joint publication of Mr. Colebrook and Mr. Lambert. Thus, instead of being weakened, his argument was strengthened by that gentleman, who added another opinion in favor of it. He thanked the hon. gentleman for the assistance he had given him, particularly as it appeared that Mr. Lambert was perfectly conversant with the private trade. The hon. Director (Mr. Grant) had told them, that articles which were generally made use of in England, would not find a market in the East; he never contended that they would; of course the manufacturers must exert their ingenuity to suit the manners and customs of the



inhabitants. Without, however, dwelling longer on the exports, he ~~would~~ content himself simply with observing, that as the hon. gentleman had not proved a diminution, but had admitted a three-fold increase to have taken place ; his proposition stood, not only unrefuted, but supported by an accession of argument. He was ready to admit, that partial failures would occur, when the trade was first opened ; this was a result to be expected from the impetuosity which would naturally attend new speculations ; but he had no doubt, when a little experience had been obtained, that the most sanguine hopes of the merchants would be accomplished.

The hon. gentleman here corrected a mistake which he had made in his former speech, respecting the increase of the American commerce with India, which he stated to be greater than what he had then calculated. He had been accused of not having considered the neutral character of America ; but, in fact, he never lost sight of it ; and he particularly wished, that such facilities should be given to the British merchant, as would enable him to take up that portion of commerce, which should be dropped, either by America, or by foreign Europe. It was said, that he had spoken incorrectly in attributing the increase of the import trade entirely to the private mer-



chants, and overlooking that part of it, which had been carried on by the officers and commanders of the Company's vessels. The fact was, that his statement was far beneath what it really might have been ; and that he had by no means gone to the extent to which he would have been justified in going. He had been satisfied, as he was not desirous of being thought to exaggerate the amount of the imports, to take the year 1800 as his *datum*, in which it appeared that the trade had amounted to £1,747,000 ; whereas, if he had gone to 1802, he would have there found, that the imports by commanders and private merchants, was £2,500,586. It appeared also, that the trade carried on by the commanders and officers, was by no means a fluctuating one ; for, in 1793, it amounted to £421,339, and in 1809, it was £433,000. The average of this trade, therefore, being nearly alike, it could not have produced that increase in the amount of the imports, which had been attributed to it.

He gave the Directors credit for the extension which took place in 1801 2, to which much of the subsequent increase of imports was to be attributed ; it was then in their power to have confined the merchant to a stricter line than they had done,—the extension was, therefore, honorable to their liberality ; stil,



however, if, under all the difficulties and disadvantages, which even then remained, the trade had been so much increased, he had a right to expect, if a more enlarged extension was granted, that it would be followed by a still greater improvement. They had been told, that the consumption of articles of European manufacture, could not be increased in India, in any material degree; but, if the facts which he stated were correct, whether ought the Court to trust to the opinion of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Grant), or to experience? whether ought they to be guided by facts, amounting almost to demonstration, or by the conclusions of the hon. Director, however high and respectable the situation which he filled? The hon. Director stood on his opinions, while he depended upon facts, and on the results of the Company's sales. As a proof that our imports could not be increased, with any advantage to the private merchant, the hon. Director stated, that cotton could not be imported for less than ten-pence per pound; but, he totally forgot to mention, how often that commodity had been disposed of, at fifteen, seventeen, and even twenty-pence per pound. In order to shew, too, that even what was imported, could not be sold, he observed, that 40,000 bales were now on hand. This, he apprehended, did not operate very for-



cibly in favor of the hon. Director's argument ; for, in truth, this stock did not amount to one half of the annual imports, which were upon the average 90,000 bales ; so that there was but a moderate quantity on hand, to answer those demands which the market was continually making. The same arguments might be applied to the indigo on hand. The value of indigo annually imported, at the rate of 6s. per pound, was £5,570,000, and the value of that on hand, was but £1,672,000 ; so that there was but one-third of a year's consumption to supply the public demand, until the arrival of the fleet ; and of this quantity, it did not appear how much was really good or fit for the purposes for which it was intended, or how much of it was kept back at the express desire of the persons to whom it belonged, with a view to an increase of price.

He next came to the commercial profits of the Company. The hon. Director had told them, that, in a given time, the Indian trade averaged a profit of £100,000 per annum, but it would be an unfair method of reasoning, to state the profit of that trade, without charging on it those duties which would be paid by any private merchant on a private venture. The amount of the duty on the exports from India taking them at one and a half per cent. amounted to



£881,000, in the period alluded to by the hon. Director. On the imports into India, there were a variety of duties, which he would take upon an average of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; some of them were below this sum, and many far above it—these duties, for the same period, produced £866,000.—It was evident that these sums should be deducted from the profits, and added to the territorial revenue—these duties, together with the simple interest of the investments, amounted to £1,917,000, which, after deducting the profits of the trade, according to the hon. Director (Mr. Grant,) left a clear loss of between 5 and £600,000, on these items alone.—If therefore this statement was correct, which, from their own arguments, it appeared that he had a right to contend, then the trade of India had been ruinous to the concerns of the Company, and was destroying those profits which the China trade afforded. With respect to the opinion of the Marquis Welleslév: that, had been given in a different manner at different periods; and as opinions vary according to circumstances, they could only have weight in reference to the events which occasioned their promulgation.

As to the political part of the question, he would observe, that if the Government were to be taken away from the Company, if the trade were



to be carried on without limitation ; if individuals were to be allowed to proceed to India, without control, or regulation, dangers of very great magnitude would certainly ensue ; but they had no right to presume that any such measures were in contemplation—no suggestion of that kind had been offered ; on the contrary, it was plain that no material alteration was sought to be effected, provided the Company *simply ceded* the import and export trade. (*A laugh.*)

However much the Court of Directors might consider this a boon to the public, he was of opinion that the very moment their charter expired, which it was now on the eve of doing, they had no other right to the India trade, than that sort of general participation to which all other British merchants were entitled ; and he hoped that the Court of Proprietors would not persist in carrying on a trade by which a loss of five or six millions had been sustained. The hon. Director had asked, why he introduced past controversies ? But he surely must have heard the assertions which were made by gentlemen, and which it was necessary he should answer. An hon. Proprietor (Mr. K. Smith), in reply to what he had observed on the delay of ships, said, that these delays were occasioned, not by the Company, but by public emergencies ; but in



his opinion, the ships intended for the commerce of private individuals, ought to be kept separate and distinct, and should not be diverted, under any circumstances, from the business for which they were professedly intended. The ships, which the hon. gentleman alluded to, as being placed under the direction of Sir Home Popham, did not arrive at their destination until long after they were expected, which created very considerable inconvenience to the merchants. This was one of the strongest points against that system which he wished to correct. He thanked the hon. Proprietor for the instance he had stated, which was a very important one, and he could now shew, from the words of the Directors themselves, the great expense which was incurred by the delay of the Company's ships.—Mr. Millet, on the 1st of July, 1809, wrote to Mr. Grant, stating that demurrage alone, on seven extra ships, amounted to £91,000. This proved a deviation, by which both the Company and the merchants suffered a loss,—he was most anxious to remove such causes of expenditure, and therefore was of opinion, that nothing ought to interfere or intervene to stop the regular dispatch of ships to and from India.

Mr. K. Smith observed, that he did not deny attentions to have taken place, but he expressly



stated, that they were occasioned by political events—and were delayed only for political purposes, and not for the advantage of the Company, who derived no benefit from them; they had been stopped for the exigencies of state.

Mr. *Hume* said, that the hon. gentleman's explanation was exactly what he wanted for his argument—It was against the system which permitted these deviations that he objected.

The hon. gentleman was then proceeding to argue, in opposition to the system which had heretofore existed, and on the difference of opinions which prevailed upon it, when he was interrupted by Sir *Hugh Inglis* who said, that the hon. Proprietor was arguing as to what the system then was, and not what it was to be in future. The proposition to the Court was, that the private merchants might be allowed to export in their own ships, without any reference to what had heretofore been the custom.—The hon. gentleman ought not to throw away so much argument in endeavouring to point out the errors of past times.—In a great part of what he had said, he had not confined himself to *explanation*, but had indulged himself in *accusation* against the Company. (*Hear! hear! and cries of Question! Question!*) He entreated they would hear the hon. gentleman.



Mr. *Hume* said, the Court would recollect, that when he last addressed them, he had not offered all the arguments which he should have done, had he been permitted, and had not so many things pressed upon him at the moment.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* observed, that if the hon. gentleman did not state every thing he had to say, on a former day, it was not the fault of the Proprietors or Directors; he had been heard with very great patience.

Mr. *Hume*, in continuation, said, that, on the score of opinion he wished to call the attention of the Court to a fact of great importance, mentioned by an hon. gentleman, (Mr. Davis) which went to prove that the deviation of one of the Company's ships, for a political purpose, had nearly been the ruin of the Captain. This fact established the necessity of separating the political and commercial part of the Company's system. The same hon. gentleman also stated, that, in no one year had there been any difficulty in obtaining even 5000 tons of the Company's shipping for private trade. He was in the shipping line; and, as his opinion would probably have a great effect with the public, he would put it to his candour, whether, in truth and in fact, the private merchants had not complain-



ed of having found considerable difficulty in getting a large allowance of freight? He did not mean to blame the Court of Directors, but the system only; and he held in his hand the admission of a former Chairman, directly contrary to the statement made, that freight could be so easily procured. As the hon. gentleman was nearly connected with the shipping trade, being managing owner of two or three vessels, from this circumstance the public would be enabled to judge whether his opinion was or was not interested. When it was alleged, before the House of Commons, that the merchants could not get sufficient freight, the Chairman of the Court of Directors answered, "that they were ready to admit the complaint, but that it was not owing to them that freight was not to be had in sufficient quantity." He (Mr. Hume) knew it was not—and it was therefore clear that new rules and regulations were called for, without which the private trade could not be carried on to advantage.

Mr. *Davis* rose to a point of order. The fact which he had formerly stated was doubted by the hon. gentleman, who had even gone farther than the expression of doubt. Mr. *Davis* was proceeding to offer some explanation in support of his former assertion, that he could procure 5,000



tons more than he could ship at any time,—  
when

Mr. *R. Jackson* rose to order. He said, the question really was, whether the usual course of their proceedings should be pursued, or whether they should be every moment broken through, for the purpose of bearing down an individual? The regular course was, if a gentleman misrepresented any thing in his speech, for the person who conceived himself aggrieved, to correct the error when the speech was over; but it was quite disorderly to use these frequent interruptions; and there was not one man in one hundred who could possibly continue collected under such circumstances.

Mr. *Hume* proceeded, by saying that he challenged any merchant or agent, of twenty years experience, to stand up and say that he never knew an instance in which tonnage could not be procured when it was wanted. He did not meet them at one point only; facts now pressed round him on every side. He was satisfied that facilities had not been afforded to the private merchants, and the more he thought on the subject the more firmly he was convinced of the necessity of a change in the present system. An hon. gentleman who spoke third in the debate (Mr. *R. Grant*) began his speech by stating, in one



sweeping clause, that all the facts which he (Mr. Hume) adduced, were entirely irrelevant or utterly inconclusive. Those statements, which he was not able to overthrow, he very prudently set aside; observing that he would not notice them, there being many other persons in the Court better calculated to perform that task. Now it was in the recollection of the Court with what applause that speech was received; although he had hoped that instead of theoretical argument the Court would have looked to practical proofs; therefore he would dismiss the speech of the hon. gentleman, which, however eloquent, did not contain one item that related to any thing he had said. He had condemned a publication, *the Edinburgh Review*, which, with a slight alteration of the text, he would say was "as able as it was useful," for having reasoned erroneously, in adducing facts which occurred in 1783, (and which were mentioned by Sir Philip Francis in his letter) as a ground for legislative enactment now; but he himself, falling into the same error for which he blamed others, observed, that the private merchants in India were at present very respectable men, and he then went back to the time of Lord Clive, and alluded to the mischiefs which a similar class of persons had then occa-



sioned, as a foundation for putting the Company on their guard against the recurrence of similar mischiefs in 1814.

However gratified he, as well as the Court, might be by the hon. gentleman's flowery metaphors and fine flowing language, yet as his whole speech proceeded on the ill-grounded assumption, that adventurers would be allowed to wander through the East unrestrained, for which supposition there was no foundation whatever, the whole of his reasoning, which was built on that mistake, must fall to the ground; the falsity of his *data*, and the consequent error of his argument, being most apparent. "If," said the hon. gentleman, "individuals were permitted to range from coast to coast, from island to island, without regulation or control, what must be the effect?" He would agree with the hon. gentleman, that if such a thing were allowed, the results would be terrible; but the correspondence of His Majesty's Ministers bore him out in the assertion, that regulations would be adopted, calculated to repress any such occurrences. Another ingenious argument of the hon. gentleman was founded on an assertion, that he (Mr. Hume) had stated, that, under the new regulation, the increase of trade would be *indefinite*. Although this expression had travelled round the Court,



he begged to observe, that he had not made use of it. What he said was, that as the trade had increased beyond what was expected, they had no right to fix positively the boundary at which that increase would stop; but the hon. gentleman (Mr. R. Grant) having assumed this expression, went on to state, that, as the increase of trade would be indefinite, the intercourse of individuals with the East-Indies would be indefinite also. All that he had wished to state was, that even if the trade were pushed to its utmost extent, it must be carried on under such regulations as were calculated to prevent danger to the country. Another hon. gentleman (Mr. Plomer) asserted, that his speech was suited to a meeting of Liverpool or Bristol merchants, but was not adapted to the Court in which it was delivered. Now if, in an assembly of gentlemen, connected with India affairs, and engaged in argument on them, statements and details relative to the commercial and political situation of that country were irrelevant to the subject under discussion, he knew not what could be termed relevant. Yet such was the effect of prejudice, that that part of the hon. gentleman's speech was applauded; though another hon. gentleman (Mr. R. Jackson) had observed, that if those facts,



which the hon. proprietor (Mr. Plomer) deemed irrelevant, were not answered, he should leave the Court with "vantage ground." The hon. Proprietor, however, who confessed that he derived his knowledge on the subject from books and conversation, boldly designated all these facts as by no means applicable to the subject. After exposing the fallacy of the assertion, when contrasted with the opinion of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Jackson), he thought he might dismiss that part of the subject without any farther notice. Another hon. gentleman (Mr. Impey) required more attention. He had called him (Mr. Hume) the organ of Lord Buckinghamshire and the Ministers, because he had espoused the claims of the Outports. Did that hon. gentleman also consider Mr. Waithman to be the organ of Ministers, because he had, on the preceding day, and in another place, supported the same principles? Yet it could not be denied, that so far from being friendly to the administration, Mr. Waithman had done every thing in his power to cry them down. The conduct of Mr. Waithman had been highly creditable to him (*hisses*); he meant so far as related to the subject of the renewal of the Company's charter; and he thought the speech which had been delivered by him in the Common



Council, on the East-India question, was worthy, from its moderation, of the particular attention of that Court.

The hon. gent. (Mr. Impey) had told them, that they ought to look to opinions only, and that facts were of no importance.—Now he submitted to the candour of the Court, whether they were not met there to decide by the experience of the last twenty years ? and he hoped they would not sanction conclusions founded merely on opinion. The same hon. gent. had observed, that not one-thirtieth part of what had fallen from him was applicable to the question ; and yet he concluded by hoping, that the whole of his speech would be published,\* and laid before the country, as the surest means of serving the cause of the East-India Company. Now, if his statements were not applicable, he was at a loss to know how they could either serve or injure the cause. Surely, if they were so irrelevant, they could not operate either one way or the other. The hon. gent. proceeded on an assumption, that Government intended to destroy the political rights and privileges of the Company.—“ Will it be permitted,” said he, “ that they should rob us of those rights to which we are entitled ? will not such an attempt produce unpopularity ? Does a Minister exist, so weak and wicked as to endeavour to



subvert our establishments ?” He (Mr. Hume) would say that it would require a strong and powerful Minister indeed to disfranchise the Company of its rights.—No weak Minister would attempt, or could effect such a purpose.—But the hon. gent. was completely wrong in his assumption ; for there was not the smallest evidence of any such intention existing on the part of Government. He had also accused them of a design “ to tear the India Company limb from limb, that its members might be given to the Outports as a remuneration for the loss of the Slave-trade.” This he thought was a most ungracious subject to mention, and was indeed acting on the principle of “ ripping up old sores,” with which he had been unjustly charged. He contended, that he was a true friend to the Company ; he wished them to flourish, as a tree, under whose refreshing shade the population of India might find protection ; but seeing a sucker, which had the effect of impairing the growth of the tree, he could not conceive it improper to use the pruning knife, with a skilful hand ; and by removing that branch, to load the tree with fruit and foliage. He had spoken nothing but the truth, and no compliment was due to him for having performed his duty ; but, when he was conscious of the rectitude of his actions, he must reprobate the con-



duct of the hon. gent., in having designated him as an enemy to the Company ; and he threw the assertion back in the teeth of him that made it.—  
(*Cries of order*).

Mr. *Impey* denied that he had made any such accusation.

Mr. *Hume* continued by saying, that the measure which he supported would not only increase the commerce of India, but add to the power and influence of the Company,—He was, therefore, no enemy to them, as had been most unfairly insinuated. He had stated, in that Court, his reasons for having come forward. He had stated them most distinctly ; and he would prove to demonstration the propriety of the views which he had promulgated.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* said, the hon. gent. had been indulged to a very great extent ; he wished that indulgence to be still continued to him ; but he hoped he would confine himself simply to explanation.

Mr. *Hume* said, that if to speak in his own defence, and to throw back those opinions which had been improperly imputed to him, was considered irregular, he had too much confidence in the rest of his argument, to persevere in that course. The hon. gent. had observed, that the East-India Company ought to bear both the



sword and purse ; and that the former was necessary to their success in commerce. If he (Mr. Hume) had made such an assertion, he might truly indeed have been termed " the enemy of the Company." Undoubtedly, defence and protection should be granted to those engaged in commercial transactions, but the coupling the sword with the purse, by the hon. gent., was one of the severest reflections on the present political Government of India. The hon. gent dwelt with great force on the ill success which attended Mr. Fox, in meddling with the East-India Company, in 1783-4.—" Did he not fail in his attempt ?" exclaimed the hon. gent.—He (Mr. Hume), knew that he was foiled, and very properly ; and if any other man stood up to effect a similar object, he trusted that he also would experience a similar disappointment. But the hon. gentleman's reasoning was not correct, for Lord Buckinghamshire's letter expressly said, " that no material change in the political situation of the Company, was intended,"—whereas it was known that Mr. Fox used all his exertions to procure the whole of the East-India patronage. Such an attempt as that, must pull down any Minister ; but let not the Court be carried away by an idea, that the two instances were at all similar. It was not intended to take anything from the Company which



was beneficial. The petitioners only requested a portion of the trade, which he thought he had demonstrated to be a losing one. He should be glad if he could follow the hon. gent. in his high eulogium on the Court of Directors, on the present occasion; but, as he differed so much from them, on the propriety of breaking off the negotiation, he could not proceed so far as the hon. gent. had done. Another gent. (Mr. Twiss) had commenced his speech by adverting to the outcry which had been made about the Company's monopoly; and then proceeded to argue against the present, as not being a proper time to make any alteration; but he ought to have known, that if ever a change was to take place, the present was the most favourable period for it; when India was in a state of perfect tranquillity, unmolested by an enemy, either within or without.

On the subject of smuggling, the hon. gent. said, using the language of an hon. Proprietor (Mr. R. Grant) that it could not be prevented; for even the acts of Buonaparte were insufficient to check the exertions of commercial enterprise. This argument was decidedly in favour of that for which he contended; for the commerce which America carried on with India, was of such a description, as the world could not do without; and which, if the Americans had



not been allowed to engross the trade, must have fallen into the hands of the British merchants. The hon. gent. observed, that if *one-half* per cent. was sufficient to induce men to smuggle bullion out of the country, there could be no doubt that a profit of 96 per cent., which would be derived from the smuggling of Teas, would occasion an incalculable increase of illicit traffic. But he should recollect the specific difference between the two articles. The exchange with France had long been from 34 to 40 per cent. against this country; in consequence of which, a man might, by conveying 1000 guineas from Dover to Calais gain a considerable sum, whilst by conveying a pound of tea, which would occupy the same space, he might gain the enormous profit of five shillings, the amount of the duty on that article.

The hon. gent. then proceeded to make some remarks on the speech of Mr. Randle Jackson, to which he had listened with great anxiety and attention. — Now, that hon. gent. did not object to any statement, except one, which he had made; and in fact had supported the whole of his arguments. He (Mr. Jackson) differed from the hon. Director (Mr. Grant), and admitted that the India trade was capable of increase. The hon. gent. had also allowed his facts to be relevant, and observed, that his had been a dry task, in answering



him; but he was at a loss to know on what point he and the hon. and learned gent. had differed. The hon. gent. indeed called on them to consider that they were a great Company, and to beware of what they were about to hazard; but, like the hon. gent. who preceded him, as he reasoned from false premises, his arguments went for nothing. He also called to their recollection the fate of a former Minister, who had fallen in an attempt to subvert the Company. "And," said the hon. gent. "where the lion failed, shall we permit the more ignoble race to bear away the spoil?" Undoubtedly not; but those apprehensions that seemed to fill the minds of hon. gentlemen were utterly groundless. Ministers had given them no reason to suppose, that their political influence would be at all impaired. The hon. gent. seemed to insinuate the charge of inconsistency against Lord Melville, as belonging to a Cabinet, whose opinions appeared to be at variance with those which he had formerly professed.—They should not forget, that his Lordship had merely stated opinions, which circumstances might alter; and, if the representations which the Earl of Buckinghamshire had alluded to, occasioned a change in his sentiments, it was highly to his honor that he acknowledged his conviction of the error of his previous opinion. But



the hon. gent. seemed to think the noble Lord ought to withdraw his support from the administration, like Lord Wellesley or Mr. Canning, who retired from a cabinet, the principles of which they did not approve. He saw the circumstance in a very different light; and, he thought, it was much to the credit of Lord Melville, who came manfully forward and avowed his change of opinion. The Earl of Buckinghamshire's letter, of the 24th of December, stated, "that Government were induced to revise the arrangement which had been in contemplation in consequence of the importance of the representations made to them;" and he (Mr. Hume) hoped the East-India Company would have the candour, like Lord Melville, to hear every argument on the subject, to weigh them maturely; and, if they saw reason for an alteration in their opinion, to stand forward and avow it.—In conclusion, Mr. Hume apologized for having detained the Court so long, and proposed, if it should meet the wish of the Court, that the hon. gent. (Mr. Weyland) should withdraw the original resolution, and he would also withdraw his amendment, till he could ascertain what those alterations were, which the hon. gent. had, on a former day, declared it to be his intention to make in the propositions which were to be submitted to them.



Sir *Hugh Inglis* stated, that the Court was in possession of the original Resolution, moved by his hon. friend (Mr. Weyland); that it was likewise in possession of the amendment proposed by the hon. Proprietor, who has just sat down; and he submitted to his hon. friend, that he ought not to withdraw his Resolution, and that the sense of the Court ought to be taken both on that and on the amendment. At that late hour of the evening, exhausted, as they must be, by the length of discussion which had taken place, if he were to follow the hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume) through his speech, (for in fact it was a *speech*, and not an *explanation*,) he should be guilty of the same error into which that gentleman had fallen, and should, perhaps, completely tire out their patience.—He hoped, however, he should be indulged in offering a few observations on the question now before the Court—he should indeed state but few, for if he had the ability, the subject had been so well debated, and every argument advanced against the privilege of the Company, been so ably answered, that little was left for him to say.

Before the question was put, however, he must call their attention to the opinions of Statesmen, which he had seen, in the course of this debate, in the hands of many gentlemen. (*Vide App.*)

Those great statesmen, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dan-



das, had left their recorded opinions, not alone in their speeches and writings, but in the measures they adopted for the renewal of the Charter, in 1793. That not less eminent man, Mr. Fox, whose loss the nation had to deplore, with his great rival statesman, Mr. Pitt, in his famous Bill of 1783, never proposed touching the exclusive trade of the Company; far less did he contemplate the opening of the Outports to the speculations of individuals. Another great statesman (Marquis Wellesley), who, happily for the nation, was still living, though favourable to an opening of the trade, to a certain and limited extent, from his local knowledge of India, and the danger attending too great an intercourse between European adventurers, and the natives of India, never entertained so wild an idea as to allow ships of individuals, from England, to range over the vast Indian ocean, or to return to the Outports of this kingdom; his enlarged mind was satisfied with making London the *emporium* of Indian commerce. (*Hear! hear!*) What had they to set against these great authorities, and the arguments they have listened to in that room with so much pleasure? They had to set against them the reasoning of the hon. member of the amendment, and perhaps the opinion of the hon. seconder, for he had not favoured the Govt with



any arguments; high as he rated the abilities of the hon. mover of the amendment, he must say, he had not made any impression on his mind. They had also indeed the opinions of His Majesty's Ministers, but they were founded on arguments which they had no opportunity of hearing. In 1793, the letters of the parties interested in opening the trade, were transmitted to the Court of Directors; and where conferences took place with His Majesty's Ministers, minutes of the proceedings were handed over to them, and ultimately submitted to the Court of Proprietors. On the present occasion they had not been so fortunate—they were ignorant of what had passed at the conferences between Ministers and the Deputations from the Outports—and they had been referred for information to the petitions with which the table of the House of Commons was loaded. (*Hear! hear!*)

The hon. mover of the amendment stated, (he presumed as a reason for the opposition of the Court of Directors,) that their patronage would be lessened. If such unworthy motives could operate on the minds of gentlemen behind that bar, he would tell the hon. gentleman that in this case, the argument would not avail him, as the great mass of patronage would remain the same to the Court of Directors, (*hear! hear!*)



whether the trade were extended to the Outports, or confined to the City of London. But there was a description of patronage which would be materially affected by the removal of the trade to the Outports; which, though of no importance to the Directors, in an interested point of view, they would be extremely sorry to lose. What would become of that meritorious class of men, the Commanders and Officers of their noble fleet of ships, and their retired military officers, worn out in the service, many of them covered with wounds, and all with honour?—Was it to be supposed, that Government would continue to them, the very liberal allowance, which they received from the Company? Was it to be imagined that Government would place them on a better footing than the servants of the public, at home? Their naval officers, too, who had been unfortunate in their service, and who, from age or infirmities, were unable to continue in it, derived a subsistence from the benevolent institution of Poplar, which was second only to the great national establishment at Greenwich—It received not only them, but their widows; and even the widows of petty officers and seamen.—This hospital was supported by contributions from their ships, and the moment their commerce was destroyed, that splendid endowment must fall with it. — (*Hear ! hear !*)



And what would be the fate of the Officers of the House and Warehouses, who commenced their services in early life, and many of whom were now grown grey in it? Had the hon. mover considered what was to be done for these persons? he says, indeed, that the Government will make compensation to them,—but had he reflected on the extent to which that compensation would be called for? did he know that it would demand millions? if they took from them their trade, they might also take their territory.—Would Government make a compensation to them for their stock, which was estimated by that great statesman, the late Lord Melville, at £200,000,000? Would they prepare to demand of the country a sum of this magnitude? Would they make compensation to the owners of docks, or to the owners of yards, who had built, and were now building their ships; and who, if their trade was destroyed, must suffer deeply? Looking at these, and the other great interests at stake, the Court would have been happy could they have met the views of His Majesty's Ministers, without yielding that on which the power rested, of conducting their affairs with safety to the Company and advantage to the public. The claimants themselves would not be benefited by what they demanded; on the contrary, he was convinced they



would be the first and greatest sufferers. Disappointed in their expectations, new clamours, and perhaps better founded than the present, would arise. They would state to Ministers, that the trade to India had been an unproductive boon, and they would demand the China trade as a recompense ; which even the hon. mover would not consent to part with, as he understands him to say, that this branch of commerce should remain with them. In the mean time, in default of other articles, the private traders might fill their ships with sugar and coffee, to the great injury of the West India Colonies.

He should make one more short observation before he concluded ; had there been no Company, there would have been no territorial possessions ; they were acquired by the funds of the Company ; they had been supported and secured by the commerce of the Company. The hon. mover had said a good deal about the increased commerce of the American and private trade to the East-Indies. Did he know, that in those years when the American and private trade flourished most, the funds destined for their commerce were diverted to the defence and preservation of their empire in the East ? And to this circumstance the extension of the American trade was in a great measure owing.



This was not to be considered as a commercial, but as a great political question; and the late Lord Melville, whose authority he had so often referred to, expressly stated, that the political and commercial interests of the Company were so blended with those of the State, as to render it impossible to divide them, without danger to the Empire. The hon. Gentleman had complained, that the extra ships of the Company were diverted from commercial to political purposes. This very circumstance was a strong argument for the continuance of the present system; for it shewed that the State and the Company were formed to uphold each other; and though sometimes it might press hard on commerce, yet the inconvenience was greatly overbalanced by the benefit derived by the Country at large. He should conclude by hoping His Majesty's Ministers would look upon this as a question on which the safety of India depended. Let them, therefore, beware, lest by opening the trade in the manner proposed, they did not shake the foundation of this establishment, and bring to the ground never to rise again, the fabric of their national greatness. (*Reiterated applause.*)

The amendment was then put from the chair, and negatived; Mr. Hume, alone, holding up his hand in favour of it. The original Resolution



was then put, and, with the exception of the same gentleman, carried unanimously.

*Mr. Weyland*, in rising to propose the second Resolution, which comprised, in a smaller space, the various topics contained in the *series* of Resolutions which were submitted to the Court on the 19th of January, observed, that, after the unanimity which appeared in agreeing to the Resolution that had just been carried, there was no necessity for him to say much in proposing the next—in all probability, any remarks which might be offered in opposition to it, would go merely to the propriety of extending the Trade to the Outports. Now, if the whole question were confined to that point, and did not include the apprehension of ulterior danger, the business could admit of little argument. But, if the trade to India were thrown open, what would become of the China trade?—what would become of the Indian Empire?—Although the hon. gentleman had disclaimed any desire to interfere with that trade, His Majesty's Ministers, of whom he was the advocate, could have no other intentions; for it was perfectly clear, if the extension now proposed did not answer the views of the merchants at the Outports, the Company would be called upon to give up every thing they possessed. He would not detain the Court longer; the prin-



ciple had been so fully discussed on the first Resolution, as, in all probability, to prevent the necessity of any further debate. He then proposed the second Resolution ; (*vide Appendix*)—which having been read—

*Mr. Randle Jackson* expressed an objection to that passage in which the Company were represented as having exported goods to India, at a loss, for the purposes of benefiting the manufactures of the mother country. This, he observed, went to prove that the Company had lost by the India trade, which was contrary to the whole course of argument advanced by the gentleman who opposed the Amendment. The fact was, that though the East-India trade was not a very profitable concern, it was not a losing one ; but, more than all, it was the great pillar of the Company's establishment. They ought not, therefore, to countenance an expression which their enemies would gladly seize hold of, and from which they might draw the most erroneous conclusions.

*Sir Hugh Inglis* thought the Resolution was sufficiently guarded. The case was simply this ; they carried on a trade in Woollens for the advantage of our manufacturers ; they lost by the Woollens, but they gained by the general returns : so that, on the whole, they were not losers.—The same observation applied to Tin.



*Mr. Randle Jackson* said, if the passage applied only to woollens, he was not prepared with information to argue it one way or the other ; but, he was sure, if it were taken generally, it was a dangerous proposition, from which very incorrect conclusions might be drawn.

*Mr. Hume* submitted, whether that Court, to use the words of the hon. gentleman, might not lay itself open to some "incorrect conclusion," if they proceeded, without further consideration, to agree to so voluminous a Resolution.—He would, therefore, suggest, that the Resolutions be printed, that they might have an opportunity of deciding, after they were perfectly acquainted with the nature of that, on which they were called to give their opinion.

*Mr. Weyland* observed, that every argument had been adduced, in the course of the discussion, which bore, in the remotest degree, on the question ; and the principle of the Resolution was perfectly well understood.—He could see no necessity for a new discussion on that which had already been so fully debated.

*Mr. Impey* after the exemplary patience which had been manifested in the discussion on the Amendment, observed, it would be quite unpardonable in him to trouble the Court at any great length,—Having disposed of the first Reso-



lution, they were called upon to proceed with the second, which did not precisely meet his ideas, as still partaking of the defect of its original concoction, that of going too much into detail. Nevertheless, as it seemed to contain the case of the Company, and as it might appear, that a difference of opinion existed amongst them, if they went into argument upon it, he hoped it would be carried with the same unanimity as that which had preceded it.

At the conclusion of the last debate, an observation fell from an hon. Proprietor, one of the City Members (Alderman Atkins), which, if not answered, might create some misapprehension. The hon. Proprietor asked, "whether the Court of Directors could not again hold a communication with His Majesty's Ministers, and state to them, that the Company was willing to open the trade on a liberal footing?" Now, from this, the public might imagine that there was an objection to open the private trade on a liberal footing; but the fact was directly the reverse; the Company had gone much farther than had ever before been demanded of them; they had conceded the extension to the private trader, without any restriction as to ships or cargoes. The public should perfectly understand what was the question in dispute; he would repeat, what he had said over



and over again, that the private trade had nothing to do with it. Had the hon. gentleman who opened the debate, proved beyond the possibility of doubt, the propriety of extending the trade, still he was doing nothing more than "beating the wind," for he looked upon that point to have been given up,—but it was the duty of the hon. gentleman to have shewn, that the admission of the Outports to a participation in the import trade, would not occasion such an increase of smuggling, as would ultimately destroy the China trade. He ought to have shewn, that if the Company refused to grant the demand, the India government could be removed out of their hands, without any danger, either to the establishments abroad, or to the constitution at home. He believed that the present was not very wide of the proposition submitted to Parliament in 1783, and he did not think that they could do better than recur to the example which was set them at that period; when all those persons, any way connected with the Company in London, saw that the proposition was hostile to their interests, they appealed to Parliament, and myriads of individuals signed the petitions; but they ought not to confine themselves to those only who were in London, they ought to call for assistance on the miners of Cornwall, and the clothiers of the



North of England, both of whom were greatly benefited by the Company, and by whose destruction they would be materially affected; though these manufacturers might procure orders for the East, after the Company had ceased to exist, they would never receive them so regularly as they had been accustomed to do. He considered these persons as their natural allies, who ought to come forward in their defence. In recurring to the year to which he had before alluded, they ought to remember, that their cause was not gained by the representation of their friends nor the eloquence of their advocates. Whatever effect they might have had on the public mind, still it was not by them they were ultimately saved. When reason and argument were no longer listened to; when the Company were overborne by clamour, a light shone out on their affairs from an HIGHER POWER. The Company could not forget, that it was the HIGHEST PERSONAGE in the Country, the object at present of their deepest regret, as he had always been of their utmost veneration, who supported them. He saw that the blow was aimed at HIS authority, and from this constitutional view of the subject, for he (*Mr. Impey*) always considered it in a constitutional view, the East-India Company derived its salvation. Might it not likewise appear to the GREAT PERSONAGE



now acting in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, that precisely the same measure was liable to the same degree of constitutional jealousy? Might he not apprehend that the power, of which he was the guardian and the depository, would be impaired by the projected alteration of the Company's system? For his part he could not conceive that those powers which were considered dangerous in the hands of Mr. Fox, could become harmless in those of Lord Liverpool or of any other Minister.—(*Hear ! hear !*) His Royal Highness had always shewn the utmost anxiety for the rights of his subjects, and therefore they might reasonably hope that he would never suffer any Minister of the Crown to be paramount to the Sovereign.

The second resolution was then put, being as follows:—

*Resolved*,—That on former discussions relative to the renewal of the Company's charter, and particularly in 1793, His Majesty's Government were prepared, at the outset, to state the precise extent of concession which could safely be allowed to the petitioners against the Company's charter; and their mature conviction appeared then to be, that the regulated monopoly of the Company was essential to the interests of the country, and that this consideration alone was a sufficient answer to all pretences for interference with that monopoly.

That the territorial possessions of the Company in In-



dia are their certain right, and that the system provided for the Indian Government by the wisdom of Parliament, together with the disinterested spirit in which it has been administered by the Company, have extended and consolidated the British Empire in the East, and added to the strength and glory of the British Empire at Home.

That the trade of the Company has long ceased to bear the character of a strict monopoly ; and that, by some further modifications, if thought indispensable, in addition to the arrangements of 1793 and of 1802, it may be rendered as much an open trade, as will be consistent with the security of revenue and the prosperity and safety of the Indian Empire.

That it is the opinion of the ablest Indian statesmen, as well as of the generality of persons acquainted with India, that no large or sudden addition can be made to the amount of British exports to that country or China ; that this opinion is confirmed by the practice of the Americans, who export chiefly bullion, and by the overloaded state of the Indian markets ; that the habits and religion of the natives are hostile to any such extension : and that the Company actually suffer a loss in this department of their concerns, with the view of employing the capital, and encouraging the industry of their countrymen at home.

That so far as relates to the ordinary produce of India, the import trade is now carried to the full extent of the demand, as appears by the value of three millions and a half sterling of private property at this moment remaining in the Company's Warehouses ; and that to



open the Outports to that trade, would be no other than a ruinous transfer of it into new channels, to the destruction of immense and costly establishments, and the beggary of many thousands of industrious individuals.

That an extension of the trade in other products, the *supposed* effect of opening the Outports, could be realised only by a large transfer of capital to India, and its consequent colonization; that, if realized, it might fatally interfere with the manufactures of England, or with her commerce to countries where similar products are already raised by British capital, imported in British shipping, and paid for by British manufacturers, and that thus, such extension would deeply injure those very persons who are most impatiently petitioning for it.

That any unrestrained intercourse of Europeans with our Indian Empire is highly to be deprecated; that the unlimited competition of commercial agents would, from the peculiar circumstances of the country, produce "a boundless scene of confusion and fraud, and ultimately the ruin of the manufacturers themselves;" and that tempting opportunities would be held out to the agents to maintain illicit intercourse with the Native Powers, and to conduct a dangerous system of communication with China from the Eastern Islands.

That this Court do most highly approve the conduct of the Directors upon the vital question of admitting the Outports to the import trade from India; and that the confusion and hazard from irregular sales at the Outports, the loss of the revenue from smuggling, and the consequent ruin of the Company's China trade, are



decisive obstacles to the policy of such a measure ;— they are therefore firmly of opinion, that the Court of Directors should, on no consideration whatever, cede this point in the discussion.

That it also appears, from numerous petitions presented to the last Parliament, that on the faith of approved and long established practice, an immense capital has been invested in establishments, peculiarly adapted to the export trade between India and China ; and that many heavy engagements have been entered into by persons in the city of London, and on both banks of the Thames, from London-bridge to Gravesend, the very subsistence of many of whom depends upon the continuance to the port of London of the export trade to India and China ; and that nearly 10,000 industrious artificers, together with their families, would be in danger of beggary, in proportion as they would be thrown out of employment, by the removal of the export trade from its accustomed channel. This Court therefore conceives, that it is of vital importance to the city and port of London, that the export trade to India and China should continue to be carried on as heretofore.

That since the high duties on articles imported would still remain, the abatement in the price of freight, expected by the petitioners to ensue from the subversion of the present system, would be productive of trifling relief to the consumer ; and that this relief would be purchased at the extreme hazard of the revenue of Customs and Excise, now collected easily by the Company, as well as imminent danger to all the sources of their wealth in India.



That there is no foundation, in fact, for the statement which ascribes to the Company's charter the advantages enjoyed by neutral foreigners over British merchants, in the admission of the former to a trade from which the latter are excluded ; for that the profit with which that trade has been carried on by those foreigners, has been entirely owing to the facilities necessarily belonging to their neutral character, and which, of course, cannot belong to the merchants of a belligerent state,

That the discharge of the political functions of the Company depends on the continuance of its commercial privileges ; that the propositions of His Majesty's Government, by giving a fatal blow to the commercial interests of the Company, will, if insisted on, eventually terminate in its political dissolution ; and that political advantages, of the highest importance, will thus be lost to the country, among which the following deserve to be distinctly noticed, as much too valuable to be sacrificed for a trifling reduction in the freight of Indian goods to Europe.

1. A marine of 100 large ships, containing a tonnage of 103,333 tons, employing 1400 officers and 10,000 seamen, of acknowledged skill and bravery, and which has been found ready and able, at all times, to minister to the national convenience and to augment the national glory.

2. An extensive establishment of yards, which has often rendered large and seasonable assistance to the Royal Navy, and might, in cases of necessity, be made available to the national defence.

3. The remittance of the fortunes accumulated by



above 8,000 officers of the Company's military service; and some hundreds of civil servants, which are transferred to the capital, and stimulate the industry of Britain.

That, in addition to these considerations, the liberal disbursements of the Company for national enterprises, and the meritorious contribution of their service to the National Fund of strength and glory, are entitled to a just and honourable remembrance, in the preparation of any measure which may vitally affect their interests.

That connected with this department of the subject, is the extreme danger to which, in case of the Company's dissolution, the balance of the Constitution would be exposed, by the transfer of the Indian Patronage to the Crown, and the enormous burden which would be entailed on the public, in satisfying the claims of compensation on behalf of the Company, and of all the complicated interests which would be involved in its fate.

That, by the destruction of the Company, a vast number of those Proprietors, amongst whom its capital of twelve millions sterling is divided, would be reduced to extreme distress, and nearly forty thousand persons, directly employed by the Company, with many others indirectly concerned in its prosperity, would be brought to a state of absolute beggary.

That, from the tenor of the preceding considerations, it appears to this Court, that no case of political or commercial delinquency has been established against the Company, to justify the ruin with which they are threatened, or to forfeit their claim to a continuance of



their Charter: that, on the contrary, their commercial management has been frequently deranged and interrupted by costly enterprises, to which they were compelled on grounds of imperial policy, and which no temporary possession could have induced them to execute: that their remonstrances against these undertakings were silenced by reference to future and distant recompense, in the improved prospect of permanent peace, revenue, and commerce, and that, by arguments which implied little less than a pledge that their privileges should be continued, at least until their indemnity should be complete:—and that it is manifestly unjust to allege against them, as a proof of commercial mismanagement, pecuniary difficulties arising out of this forcible diversion of their commercial funds to national purposes.

That, with a view to their financial difficulties, thus incurred on the Public account, the Directors, in the year 1803, apprehending the consequences of the transfer of the Indian territorial debt to England, proposed methods to meet and provide for those consequences; but that His Majesty's Ministers refused to forward those propositions to India, and have not substituted any other proceeding for the same end.

That the Court appeal confidently to the following particulars, from the close of the Fourth Report of the Committee of the House of Commons appointed in the late Parliament, for a proof, not only that the Company have carried on their affairs without any expence to the finances of this country, but that the operations



of their system have been in manifold ways beneficial to its interests.

1st. That since 1791, British industry has been encouraged by the employment of £46,000,000.

2d. That the produce and manufactures of India; purchased with this sum, together with those of China sold in England, realized in sale amount nearly £140,000,000.

3d. That the purchase of the produce and manufactures of England amounted to £29,200,000.

4th. That the employment of British shipping amounted to £25,000,000.

5th. That the duties on imports, collected through the Company at a trifling expence to Government, amounted to £39,300,000; and on exports to £660,000; —together, £39,960,000.

6th. That the combination of these, and other sums, producing £185,960,000, shews that, on an average of the last seventeen years, £10,900,000 has been diffused in various channels through the whole circulation of the British Empire, &c.

That, for proof of the moral and political benefits derived to the population of India from the government of the Company, this Court appeals to the fifth Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, which exhibits the gratifying picture of a people raised from the lowest disorder and degradation, to a state of industry, security, and freedom; and that this Court confidently hopes, the improvement in the condition of fifty millions of natives will not be interrupted, by the pernicious experiments to which the sanction of Parliament is now so loudly solicited.



That the interests of the Company are now become so interwoven with the political and commercial system of Britain, that, by their sudden dissolution, the credit and grandeur of this country would receive a shock, which *must* be perilous, and *might* be fatal: and that the measures proposed by Government are therefore anxiously to be deprecated, inasmuch as they must have the effect of bringing the Company to speedy destruction.

That, with such a case in favor of the Company, the Court is assured they may approach Parliament with confidence, and without the smallest alarm from the misrepresentations with which they have been assailed; and they are persuaded that the wisdom of that enlightened body will never countenance the sacrifice of clear and positive interests of one class of men, to the contingent and uncertain advantage of another; nor demolish a mighty practical system, which has been raised by such immense exertions, in order to place its materials at the disposal of interested speculation.

That this Court approves, most highly, the firm exertions, by which the Directors have now enabled the Company, if necessary, to bring their case in its integrity before the tribunal of Parliament. They tender their warmest thanks to the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, and the Court of Directors, for their zeal and ability in support of this important cause; and they trust that, if any opening should present itself for a renewal of the discussion between the Company and His Majesty's Government, upon



the principles detailed in this resolution, it will be conducted by them with the energy and moderation which they have hitherto displayed.

The above resolution was carried without any dissentient voice except that of Mr. Hume. The Court then adjourned, *sine die*.







## APPENDIX.

---

*Substance of Lord Buckinghamshire's Letter to the Chairman, noticed in page 76 of the Debate.*

“ That as to his (Lord B.'s) name being at the head of a subscription to take off by lottery the cargo of the *Rodney*, which could not find a market in India, he had no recollection at all of the circumstance. He did recollect, that upon the arrival of the *Hillsborough* at Madras, it had been signified to him by the Captain, that he should be utterly ruined, if he was obliged to depart without finding a sale for his goods. Upon this representation, he, with others, engaged to take his investment from him, at their own risk ; and it was afterwards sold without loss. This was the only recollection he had of any transaction similar to what had been stated.”

*Opinions of the late Lord Melville, Lord Grenville, Marquis Wellesley, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Pitt, Sir Philip Francis, and the Select Committee of the House of Commons for India Affairs.*

*Letter from Lord Melville, dated 2d April 1800.*

“ That the ostensible form of Government, with all its consequent extent and detail of patronage, *must remain as it is*, I am persuaded will never be called in question by any but those *who may be disposed to sacrifice the freedom and security of our Constitution to their own personal aggrandizement and ill-directed ambition.*

✱



I remain equally satisfied as to the propriety of continuing a monopoly of the trade in the hands of the East-India Company. Those who maintain the reverse, appear to me, to be misled by general theories, without attending to the peculiar circumstances of the trade they are speaking of.

“ The great interest to be attended to on the part of the Company, is, that no goods come from India that are not deposited in the Company's Warehouses, and that the goods so imported are disposed of at the Company's sales agreeably to the rules prescribed for that purpose.”

*Marquis Wellesley's Letter, 30th September, 1800.*

“ It would be equally unjust and impolitic, to extend any facility to the trade of the British Merchants in India, by sacrificing or hazarding the Company's rights or privileges, by injuring its commercial interests, by admitting an indiscriminate and unrestrained commercial intercourse between India and England, or by departing from any of the fundamental principles of policy, which now govern the British establishments in India.”

*Lord Melville's Letter, 21st March, 1801.*

“ The preservation of the monopoly of the East-India Company is essentially requisite for the security of every important interest connected with our Indian Empire; and so deeply am I impressed with the truth of this proposition, that I am prepared explicitly to declare, that although the first formation of an East-India Company proceeded from purely commercial considerations, the magnitude and importance to which the East-India Company has progressively advanced, is now so interwoven with the political interests of the Empire, as to create upon my mind a firm conviction that the maintenance of the monopoly of the East-India Company, is even more important to the political interest of the State, than it is to the commercial interests of the Company.



*Mr. Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons, 11th March 1793.*

“ I have no hesitation in saying, that when all the circumstances are fully before the House, I am confident that a *Renewal of the Company's Charter will appear to be much for the interest of the country.*—It has been said that since the publication of the speech of my right honorable friend (Mr. Dundas) every body believes that the charter will be renewed : and I am glad to hear that such is the case, because it can only arise from a public conviction, that the renewal of the Charter, upon the terms and upon the regulations on which the East-India Company have agreed to accept it, will be much for the interest of this country in every point of view.”

*Lord Melville's Speech in the House of Commons, April 1793.*

Stating “ his full conviction, after mature consideration, that if the Indian patronage should be vested and concentrated immediately in the Crown, the *weight of it* would be too great in the balance of our government, and might prove dangerous to the spirit of the constitution.” \*

*Sir Philip Francis's Speech in the House of Commons, April 1793.*

“ With respect to the Renewal of the Company's exclusive Charter to trade to India ; I have already

\* Mr. Pitt said, he perfectly agreed that a capital speech had been made by Mr. Dundas ; this the House and the Public already knew :—A speech which, for comprehensive knowledge of the history of India and of the various sources of the British commerce to the East-Indies, deduced from authenticated statements of Indian affairs, and for wise arrangements for the administration of our Asiatic provinces, and of the general commerce of the empire ; a speech which, combining objects formerly thought irreconcilable, presented one great plan for the improvement of the whole ; a speech which he would venture to affirm, though it might have been equalled in that House, never had been excelled.—*Debate in the House of Commons, 24th May, 1793.*



said, *that I do not object to it. . . . . I very much question the possibility of increasing our exports to India to any material amount, I mean with a rational security of finding a profitable vent for them. Except military stores, ammunition, and other implements of war, with which it is not your true policy to furnish the Indian princes, the manufactures of England can hardly be said to be saleable in India beyond the trifling amount necessary for the consumption of Europeans.*"

*Mr. Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons, 24th May 1793.*

Mr. Pitt proceeded to examine the observations made by Mr. Fox upon the commercial and political arrangements in the bill. He (Mr. F.) had had recourse to the *common place topic, that a free trade was preferable to a monopoly*, insisting that the House ought not to forget this principle, unless very good reasons should be given for adopting a contrary one. *This speculation*, Mr. Pitt said, *had been repeated a thousand times by much less ingenious men than the right hon. member, and scarcely could have been expected to have been resorted to, as the force of it had been done away by his right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas) when he first opened the subject, bottoming his argument, not on vague speculation but on inferences drawn from history and from authenticated accounts.* Here Mr. Pitt asked *whether the claims of the manufacturers had not been listened to and provided for, and whether the exclusive privilege of the Company had not been rendered subservient to the resources of the Empire?*

*Lord Grenville's Speech in the House of Lords, 3d June 1793.*

Lord Grenville said "that if it were necessary for him to enter at large, into any general detail on the subject of our possessions in India, or any speculative discussion with respect to the mode in which India ought to be governed, and in which the trade of that country ought to be carried on, it would open a very



wide and extensive field indeed; but, in the present case, it did not appear to him that this was in any shape necessary, because he felt that the ground he had to go on was very much narrowed, by having a just and well-founded experience as a guide; a guide which was at all times perhaps the best, but more particularly so under such circumstances as existed at present. *Nine years experience had proved the benefit of the present system, and there appeared therefore no just reason why it should be altered.* The present bill of course assumed for its principle the continuance of that system; but as ideas had been entertained by some, that in the hands of the East-India Company, the trade to India, was confined within narrower limits, than would be the case were it open to be engaged in by the whole capital and the whole spirit of enterprise of this country; provisions were now, for the first time, introduced into the present bill, which would give an opportunity for trying the experiment, by allowing merchants and traders to adventure on their own bottom under certain NECESSARY regulations.

*Lord Castlereagh's Opinion expressed in the Debate in the House of Commons on the East-India Budget, 18th July 1806.*

It seemed, however, unjust to describe the Company's commerce as carried on at a loss. To what precise extent it might be profitable, after providing a liberal dividend to the proprietors, might be a matter of more difficult calculation, and must, like all commercial results, be in its nature fluctuating; but, in reasoning upon this branch of the Company's affairs, the worthy alderman (Mr. Prinsep) must establish several preliminary facts, before he can expect to persuade Parliament that the commercial existence of the Company is to be considered merely on grounds of mercantile profit. He must be prepared to shew that individuals would be as likely to carry on steadily the commerce of India, under all the fluctuations to which such a trade is liable, where the outgoings are great, and the returns distant, as a great trading



corporation. He must be prepared to dispel the apprehensions which must be entertained with respect to the injurious influence on the prosperity of India, which may be the consequence of an unsteady and unequal demand for their produce, before he can expect to satisfy Parliament that an intercourse, perfectly unrestrained, is preferable to that qualified intercourse, partly free and partly restricted, which now prevails. If he assumes, that individuals by using an inferior description of tonnage, could carry on the trade at less expense, and consequently at greater profit, he must be prepared to shew, that this is not merely by throwing the difference of the expense on the public, by rendering numerous and expensive convoys requisite to protect their feeble vessels in time of war, whilst the Company's ships, with a comparatively slight aid from our navy, are competent to protect each other, and to set the enemy's ships of war, even when in considerable force, at defiance. He must be prepared to shew, that such an establishment as that of the Company, could be kept up without the protection of a qualified monopoly; or that such a system is in itself unnecessary to the political existence of the Company, and the management of large territorial revenues, when both in peace and in war funds must be transferred through the medium of commerce from India to Europe and from Europe to India. He must also shew, before he can establish that the interest of the manufacturer at home is interested in such a change, that individual speculators would be disposed to send out British manufactures, even at some loss; as the Company have frequently done, or that there is any other limit to the amount of this description of export, on the part of the Company, than the utmost quantity the Indian market can take off, which they have not hitherto been able, with their most strenuous efforts and some sacrifices, to carry beyond 2,000,000 a year. These, and many other important doubts must be solved, before any satisfactory or sound conclusion can be come to, on the great practical question (Private



Trade), to which the worthy alderman, somewhat out of time, had been solicitous to point the attention of the Committee.

*Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, July 1812.*

The Committee, after declaring that they felt it a part of their duty to offer some account of the nature and history of the extensive establishments for the internal administration of India, "trust that such an account will be acceptable to the House, not only as shewing the importance and utility of the establishments themselves, to the welfare and order of the country, but as evincing the unremitting anxiety that has influenced the efforts of those to whom the government of our Indian possessions has been consigned, to establish a system of administration best calculated to promote the confidence, and conciliate the feelings of the native inhabitants, not less by a respect for their own institutions, than by the endeavour gradually to engraft upon them such improvements, as might shield, under the safeguard of equal laws, every class of the people from the oppressions of power, and communicate to them that sense of protection and assurance of justice, which is the efficient spring of all public prosperity and happiness.

*Historical and Commercial Data on which the East-India Company's Charter was renewed in the year 1793.—Extract of a Report from the Select Committee, laid before Parliament, previous to passing the Regulating Act in 1793.*

So early as the year 1600, in the infancy of the East-India Trade, the propriety of rendering it a Monopoly became evident to Queen Elizabeth. This truth, thus early acknowledged, has been since considered as an axiom of Government. Whenever it has been departed from, the evils arising from the innovation proved their own cure.



Under reigns so different as those of the Stuarts, and William the Third, this monopolized commerce continued to be guarded by very strong measures of Government.

The Nation even thought necessary to make it a stipulation in the Treaty of Vienna, (concluded in 1731) that the Emperor Charles VI. should, in favour of the British monopoly, give up the Ostend Company, his favourite scheme, in protection of which he had long shut his ears against the clamours of Great Britain and Holland.

The short periods for which the Charter has been, from time to time, renewed, prove that however experience might convince, as to the advantages of an exclusive trade, still there existed in Government a laudable caution with respect to the public benefit, in reserving a power of resumption at a short period.

From this caution, the Company's monopoly, in deriving its stability, derives its glory; for repeated Charters, Royal Proclamations, and Acts of Parliament, have sanctioned the wise policy of Elizabeth.

The emergencies of Government, and that prudence which sometimes prescribes a temporary sacrifice to popular prejudice, have indeed, at some periods, seemed to favour the views of individual adventurers. But these appearances lasted no longer than the necessity which extorted them. It was rather a connivance than a licence.

Neither does it appear that these individuals ever succeeded in their speculations. They bought at a high price, from the poverty of the State, or the venality of its members, a permission to ruin themselves.

There occurs only one instance that forms an exception to the uniform opinion of Government on this great and important commercial point; it is the attempt of Oliver Cromwell, about the year 1655, to lay the trade open. This bold experiment terminated as might have been expected, it confirmed the Protector in the wisdom of that policy which he had doubted—The monopoly was re-established, and



the Company's temporary abolition became, in its consequences, their triumph.

*Speech of EARL MOIRA, at the Entertainment given to his Lordship by the Court of Directors at the City of London Tavern, the 29th January 1813, previous to his departure to assume the office of Governor General, and Commander-in-Chief of the Company's Forces in India.*

The Chairman (Sir H. INGLIS) having given—

“ Lord Moira, and success to his Government.”

After returning thanks for the honour done him, and expressing his earnest desire to merit it by the zeal with which he should endeavour to maintain the important interests committed to his management, his Lordship adverted to the inseparable connexion of those interests with the welfare of the Empire. The sources of that public prosperity which had raised this country so far beyond any other in the world, had been happily suggested to their reflection by the song “ God save the King,” to which they had listened with so much pleasure. It was indeed to the liberty which this country enjoys under the reign of the Brunswick line, that we must refer all our blessings. The consciousness of this freedom is the spring of all that individual exertion whence arises the strength and splendour of the British Empire. The commerce which has furnished the nerves of that strength, could only have received its energy from the security felt by every one engaged in it, for his undisturbed enjoyment of all that his skill and activity might acquire. The stupendous structure with which he on this occasion had the honour of being publicly connected, rested on no other foundation. And to what a pitch had it been carried!—That room exhibited a strict verification of what elsewhere was but a rhetorical figure. “ Her Merchants are Princes,”—Princes, not in extent of



territory alone; but in elevation of soul, and liberality of spirit—Princes, not merely in imperial sway, but in the bestowal of blessings on all over whom they ruled. It had been his duty of late to peruse with particular attention the instructions transmitted from time to time by the Directors, for the management of their possessions in India. The generous equity, the active and unremitting solicitude for the comfort of their Indian subjects, which those instructions uniformly evinced, afforded the proudest triumph for the British character. How nobly those dispositions of the Directors had been seconded by the servants of the Company in India should not rest upon his vague assertion. He would appeal to testimony beyond the reach of possible suspicion. He would recur to documents which afford irrefragable conclusion as to the inestimable advantages obtained by the natives of those districts which had fallen under the dominion of the Company. He alluded to the Reports of the Committee of the House of Commons; judges, so far from partial, that they acted upon severe, if not even hostile, scrutiny. What have these Reports exhibited?—rapid increase of population from the hour that each district became a part of the Company's possessions;—surprising augmentation of revenue, although innumerable imposts, to which the inhabitants had been subjected under their own Princes, were suppressed by the Government of the Company: in short, all that can indicate confidence and security, happiness and affluence. He could not point at those additions of territory without recollecting the valour and conduct of that army to which the empire owed such important acquisitions. He was well aware, that no eulogy from him could render more vivid the lustre which justly attended their services; but it was his pride to have been addressed that day by a title (Commander-in-Chief) which identified him, in all but the glory of their achievements, with the army of the Company; and he might be allowed, from feeling a common interest with it, the gratification of this assertion of its merits. The ability of its officers, the



gallantry of the troops, the splendour of its actions, through a long period of our history ; the persevering fortitude with which it has resisted combinations where its numbers appeared wholly disproportioned to the peril—its humanity to the conquered no less signal than its intrepidity in the contest : and the immense value of those possessions which it has added to the general stock, must ever hold forth that army as an object of admiration and respect to the British people. Was there aught beyond this ?—yes, that army had the glorious consciousness of having planted benefits wherever it has raised its trophies, and of having marked the career of its triumphs by the diffusion of all the blessings which flow from the distribution of impartial justice and the protection of an enlightened government. Such was the fabric which he had the high distinction of being entrusted to superintend. He saw, yet saw with satisfaction, no brilliancy of career before him, because his predecessors in the Government, and those who had gone before him in the military command, had left no difficulty to be encountered—no dangers to be subdued—still there was enough to gratify honest ambition. It would be sufficient praise for him, if by vigilance and patient assiduity, he could preserve unimpaired that sublime edifice of national glory, which had been reared by the supereminent talents and unconquerable valour of former servants of the Company.

*Extract from the SHEFFIELD PETITION, adverted to by Mr. Grant (the Director), in the preceding Debate.*

—Alarming state of commerce in consequence of exclusion from the Continent of Europe, from America, from Africa, by the difficulty of access, and barbarism of the inhabitants, and from the richest provinces of Asia by the monopoly of the East-India Company, the discontinuance of which would be one



of the most easy and effectual measures for relieving the distresses of the manufacturers, &c. by the discovery and establishment of such new and abundant markets, as would enable us to set at defiance the efforts of the Ruler of France. " If the trade of this United Kingdom were permitted to flow unimpeded over those extensive, luxuriant, and opulent regions, though it might, in the outset, like a torrent repress, swollen by obstruction, when its sluices were first opened, break forth with uncontrollable impetuosity, deluging instead of supplying the district before it; yet, that very violence which at the beginning might be partially injurious, would in the issue prove highly and permanently beneficial; no part being unvisited, the waters of commerce, that spread over the face of the land, as they subsided might wear themselves channels through which they might continue to flow and afterwards in regular and fertilizing streams; and that to the wealthy, enterprizing, honorable and indefatigable British merchant, conducting in person his own concerns, no obstacle would prove insurmountable, no prejudice invincible, no difficulty disheartning: wants where he found them he would supply, where they did not exist he would create them, by affording the means of gratification.

THE END.



## **East India Affairs.**

*Recently published by BLACK, PARRY, and Co.  
Booksellers to the Honorable East India  
Company.*

PAPERS respecting the NEGOCIATION for a Renewal of the East India Company's exclusive Privileges. 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.  
CORRESPONDENCE and PROCEEDINGS in the NEGOCIATION for a Renewal of the East India Company's Charter. 8vo. Price 1s. 6d.

REPORT on the NEGOCIATION between the HONORABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY and the PUBLIC, respecting the Renewal of the Company's exclusive Privileges of Trade for Twenty Years, from March 1794. By John Bruce, Esq. M.P. F.R.S. Historiographer to the Hon. East India Company. Printed by authority of the Hon. Court of Directors. 4to. price 15s. boards.

ANNALS of the HONORABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY, from their Establishment by the Charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1250, to the Union of the London and English East-India Companies, 1707-8. By John Bruce, Esq. M.P. and F.R.S. Keeper of His Majesty's State Papers, and Historiographer to the Honorable East-India Company. 3 vols. 4to. £4. 10s.

A few Copies, in Royal 4to. £6. 6s.

The FIFTH REPORT from the SELECT COMMITTEE of the HOUSE OF COMMONS on the AFFAIRS of the EAST-INDIA COMPANY; as ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 28th July, 1812. Containing, —I. **BENGAL PRESIDENCY** :—1. A Summary of the different Systems of Internal Government, antecedent to 1784. 2. On the Reforms introduced by Lord Cornwallis, under Orders of the Court of Directors of 12th April 1786. 3. On the practical Effects of the New System of Government.—II. **PRESIDENCY OF FORT ST. GEORGE** :—1. View of the Measures and Systems adopted for the Administration of the Land Revenues, &c. in the Ancient Territories, down to the Period when the Bengal System of Revenue Management was extended to those Territories. 2. View of the Progress of Revenue Administration in the Modern Possessions, given under the separate Heads of Havelly Lands, and Poligar or Zemindary Lands. 8vo. Price 12s. boards.



## BOOKS ON EAST-INDIA AFFAIRS.

**EAST-INDIA STATUTES** — A Collection of Statutes relating to the East-India Company; with an Appendix, containing Acts, and Parts of Acts, relating to Shipping, Duties, Regulations for Export and Import, &c. &c. which in general do not solely relate to the East-India Company: together with a copious Index of the Whole. For the Use of the East-India Company. 4to. 2s. 4s. calf, lettered.

**ORIENTAL COMMERCE; or, A Guide to the Trade of the East-Indies and China.** By William Milbourn, of the Hon. East-India Company's Service. Two Volumes Royal Quarto, Price 2s. 5s. in boards, illustrated with numerous Charts, engraved by Arrowsmith.

**ENGLISH AND HINDOOSTANEE NAVAL DICTIONARY** of Technical Terms and Sea Phrases, as also the various Words of Command given in working a Ship, &c. with many Sentences of great Use at Sea; to which is prefixed a Short Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language: the whole calculated to enable the Officers of the Hon. East-India Company's and Country Service, to give their Orders to the Lascars with that Exactness and Precision, which, upon many Occasions, must prove of the greatest Importance. By Lieutenant Thomas Roebeck, of the Madras Establishment, Acting Examiner and Assistant Secretary in the College of Fort William. 12mo. 7s.

**THE PRELIMINARY DEBATE** at the EAST-INDIA HOUSE, on Tuesday, the 5th January, 1824, on the Negotiation with His Majesty's Ministers relative to a Renewal of the Charter; with an Appendix containing all the Letters and Documents referred to upon the Subject. By an Impartial Reporter. 2s.

**THE EAST-INDIA DIRECTORY** for 1813, Corrected to the 1st December, 1812. Containing complete Lists of the Company's Servants, Civil, Military, and Marine, with their respective Appointments at the different Presidencies in the East-Indies; with Indexes to the same, and Lists of Casualties since the last Publication; Together with Lists of the Europeans, Mariners, &c. not in the Service of the East-India Company; with the Births, Marriages, and Deaths in the several Presidencies in the year 1811. Also, a List of the Merchant Vessels employed in the Country Trade, compiled from the Official Returns received in the East-India Office by John Matheson and Alexander Wavell, of the Secretary's Office, East-India House. By Permission of the Hon. East-India Company. Illustrated with a New Coloured Map of Hindostan, pointing out the Late Division of Territory. Price 6s. sewed.



**SUBSTANCE**

OF THE

**"SPEECH**

OF THE

**RIGHT HON. HENRY DUNDAS,**

**IN THE**

**HOUSE OF COMMONS,**

**ON THE**

**BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND TRADE**

**IN THE**

**EAST-INDIES,**

*April 23, 1793.*

---

LONDON;

Printed for BLACK, PARRY, and CO.   
Street.

---

1813.



---

Printed by Cox and Baylis, Great Britain Works,  
Lincoln's Inn Fields.



Mr. PITT said, he perfectly agreed that a capital speech had been made by Mr. Dundas; this the House and the Public already knew :—A speech which, for comprehensive knowledge of the history of India and of the various sources of the British commerce to the East-Indies, deduced from authenticated statements of Indian affairs, and for wise arrangements for the administration of our Asiatic provinces, and of the general commerce of the empire; a speech which, combining objects formerly thought irreconcilable, presented one great plan for the improvement of the whole; a speech which he would venture to affirm, though it might have been equalled in that House, never had been excelled.

*Debate in the House of Commons,  
21th May, 1793.*







**SUBSTANCE**  
**OF THE**  
**SPEECH**  
**OF THE**  
**RIGHT HON. HENRY DUNDAS,**  
**&c. &c.**

---

MR. DUNDAS introduced his observations upon the important national subject of the British government and trade in the East-Indies, by stating that the difficulties which he had experienced had arisen, not only from the importance and magnitude of the subject, but from the system which he was to propose being in opposition to established theories in government and in commerce. These theories, he admitted, were just and applicable to other causes, and yet, he found it dangerous to listen to them when he was devising a plan of government and a system of trade for British India. "No writer upon *political economy*," said he, "has as yet supposed



that an extensive empire can be administered by a commercial association ; and no writer on *commercial economy* has thought that trade ought to be shackled by an exclusive privilege. In deviating from these principles, which have been admitted and admired, I am sensible that my opinions have popular prejudices against them, but I am supported by successful experience ; and when the House adverts to the peculiarities of the subject before them, they will at once see that I am not attempting to overturn theories, though I am unwilling to recede from old and established practice.

“ I wish, in the outset, to arrest the attention of the House, and to fix it on the advantages which Great Britain actually possesses, and then to ask, whether it would be wise or politic to forego them in search of greater advantages which may exist only in imagination ?

“ It would be idle, it would, perhaps, be a proof of ignorance, to maintain that all the advantages which Great Britain possesses from its connection with India arise out of the present exclusive privilege of the Company ; but it would be rash, and perhaps impossible, to say, what might be the political or commercial effects of a variation from the present system. In an age of enterprize and improvement, men are



unwilling to hear of restraints, but the wisdom of the British Parliament will not rashly relinquish a positive good in possession for a probable one in anticipation."

Mr. Dundas then stated, that the shipping employed by the East-India Company amounted to 81,000 tons; that the seamen navigating those ships were about 7000 men, who had constant employment; that the raw materials imported from India, for the use of the home manufactures, amounted annually to about £700,000; that the various articles of British produce and manufacture annually exported to India and China, on the Company's ships, amounted to upwards of a million and a half sterling, including the exports in private trade, allowed to individuals; that the fortunes of individuals acquired in India, and remitted home through the medium of private trade, by bills on the Court of Directors, or by other means, formed an addition to the capital of the nation, the amount of which could not be accurately ascertained, but might be stated, at least, at a million per annum.

"The industry of Britain," he observed, "is thus, on the one hand, increased by the export of produce and manufactures, and the consump-



tion of these manufactures enlarged by the number of persons returning with fortunes from India ; and on the other, it is fostered and encouraged by the import of the raw materials from India, upon which, many of our most valuable manufactures depend. It would be unnecessary to analyze the articles with a minuteness that is inconsistent with an explanation of the general principles upon which I am to rest the propositions to be submitted to Parliament ; let it suffice to observe, that the receipts and payments of the East-India Company amount annually to more than six millions sterling. Under such circumstances, I pause before I listen to theories ; if I had less experience in commercial economy than practice has given me, perhaps, like others, I might be misled."

Having made these general observations, Mr. Dundas brought forward, for the consideration of the House, the general question. *Upon what principles ought the state to govern its Indian possessions ? and under what regulations ought the trade to the East-Indies to be conducted ?* " I wish, if it were possible, to state separately my observations upon the *two great points* comprehended in this question ; but I find that it would be impracticable to explain my ideas of



the government, without frequently referring to the connection established between it and the trade."

Mr. Dundas then stated, in concise terms, the nature of the present government of India; that it was vested in a corporation under the controul of the executive power, and the superintending authority of Parliament, and that the experience of nine years had justified this system, and induced him to propose to the consideration of the House the continuance of it. "There were," said he, "facts and events respecting which there could be no difference of opinion. India, or the country in Hindostan governed by Britain, is in a state of prosperity unknown to it under the most wise and politic of its ancient sovereigns. The British possessions, compared with those of the neighbouring states in the peninsula, are like a cultivated garden compared with the field of the sluggard; the revenues of India have been increased, and the trade connected with them is in a state of progressive improvement. A war, as inevitable as it was politic, has been conducted with vigour, and brought to an honourable and advantageous conclusion. Should it here be said that the Company is an improper instrument for the management of an empire: I would (if they were not



under the control of the Executive Power and the superintendence of Parliament) readily admit the force of the argument, but if I find them to be an organ of Government, and of Trade, which has experimentally proved itself to be suited to the administration of distant provinces, the revenues of which are to be realized through a regulated commerce, I am afraid to lay aside a means which has hitherto answered all the political and commercial purposes for which they had been employed."

In this place, he again adverted to the force of theories in politics, and admitted, that though he neither was able nor disposed to refute them, yet he could not feel it to be wise, to recede from practice, which experience had proved to be for the interest and the aggrandizement of the Empire.

Mr. Dundas then took a view of the hypothesis, that the system of governing India should be altered, and enumerated the difficulties which must be overcome, before the separation of the Government from the Trade could be effected.

In the first place, he asked, "Would not the Company, under the general terms of their charters, lay claim to the whole territorial revenues of India?" They in fact do make such a claim; but he was by no means of opinion, that it had any legal foundation. It must however, be allowed,



that there is room for much legal discussion on this subject. Under this impression he had asked from those, who to local knowledge had added experience in governing India, and in conducting the trade; What building of every description would be required by the Company, for the purposes of trade, and what would be required by Government, exercising its civil, military and financial powers? He had asked, Upon what data the compensation for the buildings and property to be assumed by the Public could proceed? He had asked, Whether the stores required for the protection and defence of the settlements were to be paid for, upon the principle of the original cost, or upon that of an equitable mercantile profit; He had asked (upon the hypothesis of a complete separation), What offices would be required for Government, and what for Commerce, and with the object of ascertaining the functions of these separate departments, and the expences which each would cost? He had asked in fine, What burdens the Company had incurred in acquiring and maintaining our territorial possessions, that he might form some estimate of the compensation to which they would be entitled, or to which, in reason and in equity, they would look forward?

He appealed to the House, whether these difficulties were not of a nature that would be em-



harrassing, in carrying into execution any plan for a separation of the Government and Revenues from the trade of India.

In the next place, supposing all the preceding difficulties to be overcome, Mr. Dundas adverted to the probable evils which the delay, arising from the plan of a separation of the government from the trade would produce. Recurring to the actual state of the revenue and of the trade, and to the advantages which the Public were deriving, and were about to receive from the Company, he asked, Would not the system of separation create an interruption in the discharge or liquidation of the Company's debts? Would it not derange the regular progress of their increasing commerce, and would there not be a serious danger, that while these innovations were introducing, rival European powers might grasp at the occasion, renew their commercial efforts, divert into a new channel the streams which were running towards Britain, and withdrawing London the emporium of the Eastern trade. We thus might lose national advantages, which we never might regain. We thus might be the losers of an idle and visionary attempt, and have nothing left but the mortifying regret of having relinquished practice. He asked, in fine, considering the distance of the two parts of our Empire from each other,



Whether any injudicious procrastination might not shake that confidence, which so remote a dependency at present had upon the sovereignty of Britain? And whether this danger was to be incurred, merely because it was true in theory, and popular in opinion, that a mercantile body was unequal to the government of distant Provinces. His reasonings, he knew, were reprobated by the political principles of ancient nations, but the case was novel; it was not through commerce that they received revenue; for commerce then was narrow, and could not be the vehicle by which a revenue could be realized by any sovereignty.

Mr. Dundas stated as a third difficulty, in receding from the present system of Government in India, the effect which the innovation might have on the minds of the Natives. They had been long habituated to look up to, and to rest upon the protection of the Company. We have now (said he), after many a struggle in the field, and after the many experiments which necessarily preceded the establishment of a regulated commerce, the prospect of consolidating our power and increasing our revenue. Would it be wise to recede from the treaties by which we acquired our territories? Or would the deviation from them accommodate itself to the feelings of the Natives?—It would be in vain to suppose, that



their minds, or their habits of thinking, could be easily familiarized to the change; no foresight could even conjecture the consequences. The Natives of India look back to the ancient sovereignty of the Moguls, and their confidence in the Company has its source in the country governments, exercising power as a branch of that subordination to which their forefathers were subjected. Would the attempt to unhinge their opinions be liberal, or would it be just? Lord Clive, to whom we owe our empire in India, with a discernment and a wisdom equal to his valour, laid the foundation for consolidating the British Power in Asia, by entwining his laurels round the opinions and prejudices of the subjugated Natives. To this political foresight, his country is as much indebted to him, as for his victory at Plassey. This great warrior and statesman thought that it would be wise to hold our territories by grants from the Mogul. He saw that all the Native Princes and States, which had sprung up out of the ruins of that Empire, were sheltering themselves under the forms of the fallen government; he knew that the power of granting or refusing privileges, no longer remained with the Emperors of Delhi; but he appealed to the rights of these sovereigns, and on these rights engrafted the British Power in Asia.



If then the Natives of India paid so much adoration to the shadows of their departed monarchs, would it be wise or politic to attempt to tear from them their feelings and their prejudices? We might attempt it, but feelings will flow on in their accustomed course. If the Company have been found a successful instrument for the administration of our Indian Affairs, might not the assumption of the Power by the State, shake the faith of the Native Princes in all the treaties which we have made with them; and might not those alliances, which had lately thrown the balance of power in India in favor of Britain be lost, by what to these Sovereigns would appear, a measure, contrary to their notions of our national honor?

In proof of the inexpediency of deviating from experience, Mr. Dundas farther appealed to the opinions of those distinguished men, who soon after the acquisition of the territorial revenues had held high situations in India: Government availing itself of their abilities and desirous of forming plans for the future administration of Indian Affairs, stated to Mr. Hastings, Mr. Barwell, Sir John Clayering, Mr. Francis, Colonel Monson, Sir William Chambers, and Sir Elijah Impey, the following important questions:

First, *Upon what political principles can Ben-*



*gal, Bahar, and Orissa be held by Great Britain?* Upon this subject, some of them were of opinion, that it would be preferable to continue the Mogul forms, to which the Natives had been habituated, and others of them recommended, that the Sovereignty should be assumed directly by Great Britain.

Second, *In whom is to be vested the Executive Power in India?* And here the opinions were equally different; some recommending that it should be in the Governor in Council; others, that it should be in the Governor and Council.

Third, *Under what restrictions is the power of Subordinate Legislation to be exercised?* And on this point, there also existed differences of opinion, respecting the share to be given to the Governor and Council, and to the Supreme Court of Judicature.

Fourth, *Under what title and in what manner ought the Territorial Revenues to be collected?* On this subject also, the opinions were at variance; some recommended the Mogul Revenue system, others the financial economy of Britain.

Fifth, *How are the other Revenues to be collected?* That is, the Duties and Customs.

Sixth, *By what Courts ought the Judicial Power to be administered in the British Provinces in India?* And here the opinions turned



upon the different modes of administering justice, among the Natives and among the British Subjects.

“ If I had found (said Mr. Dundas) that so many able men, who either possessed the advantage of local information or who were employing themselves, in the pursuit of it, had agreed in opinion, in the answers which they transmitted home upon all or upon any of these subjects, it would have been an inducement to build a system upon them: But from their differences of opinion, I can only draw this conclusion, that it is safer to rest on the present system, which experience has rendered practicable, than to entrust myself to theories, about which ingenious and informed men have not agreed.”

Having thus shewn the expediency of continuing the foreign government, as at present administered, Mr. Dundas then considered the propriety of continuing the domestic plan of administration. He was aware (he said) it might be asserted, that though the patronage was *directly* in the Company, it was *indirectly* in the Crown. With respect to this subject he wished only to fix the attention of the Committee on the fact; that the civil and military servants were appointed by the Directors. He by no means meant to be understood, as asserting, that the



recommendation of a person by the Executive Power, would not meet with attention; on the contrary, he was free to confess, that it had often done so, and that the Directors had been disposed to listen to such recommendations. He was ready even to meet any objections upon that topic, by the fair avowal of the degree, in which the Court had listened to the wishes of the Executive Power, and he would be happy, when that subject came to be under the consideration of the House, if any opportunity offered to state the extent of patronage, which had been, from time to time, exercised by Government. At the same time, he stated his full conviction, after mature consideration, that if the Indian patronage should be vested and concentrated immediately in the Crown, the weight of it would be too great in the balance of our Government, and might prove dangerous to the spirit of the Constitution. It was enough at present, to refer to the fact, that the patronage, from the appointment of Writers and Cadets, and the promotion through all the gradations in the civil and military departments were in the Company. Upon the supposition however, that abuses of this power had been committed, to the extent with which the Company had been charged, still he would rather endure these abuses than run the risk of alarming



the best friends of their Country, by an undue increase of the Executive Power. Had even the Government of India remained as much constrained by the Executive Power and by Parliament, as before the establishment of the present system, by the Act 1784, still, with all its imperfections on its head, and with all the faults which marked it, he would have preferred a lesser to the greater evil, of placing the administration of the Government and Revenues, in the hands of the State.

The case, however, was otherwise, the Company could no longer oppress the Natives, by an unjustifiable augmentation of revenue, because the affairs of India were under the immediate controul of the Executive Power: The Company could no longer augment their investments by despoiling the Natives of the fruits of their industry, because the tenures on which the lands were held were rendered permanent, and the taxes on the produce of arts and manufactures were known and fixed. The Company could no longer make war, to gratify the avarice and ambition of their Servants, because their Servants were now made responsible to their Superiors, and these to the decisions of a British Parliament.



"The present system of governing India, both abroad and at home, has been found adequate to the objects both of war and of peace." "In so far as that system shall appear to be experimentally erroneous, it can be varied and improved by regulations, calculated to remedy those errors, but it would be unjustifiable rashness totally to overturn it, and to enter on the task of inventing, what might, perhaps, be only more perfect in description. It may not be improper, at the same time, to observe that if the present domestic system has been found adequate to the past, there seems no reason to think that it will be less so for the future. "I allow (said he) that when the present controuling Power was instituted, the Commissioners for the Affairs of India had much to learn from the details of business, nor do I consider it as ostentation, when I look back to the embarrassing situation of the Company's affairs, to the difficulties which were to be surmounted, and to the fortunate issue of our efforts, to give it as my opinion, that it is safer for this country to continue the present mode of government by the Directors, controuled by the Executive Power, than to recur to the speculative plan of inventing a more perfect system, however recommended as plausible in theory or splendid in experiment. So far as regards myself, ever look-



ing forward to the present moment when a system for Indian Affairs is to be finally devised and adopted by Parliament, it was always my object, in all the Reports which I have annually submitted to Parliament, and in all the publications on Indian Affairs which I have either patronized, or authorized, to give to the Public every thing that I myself knew respecting the subject, and to take off the veil from what has been called the *arcana* of Indian Politics and Trade, that the plans respecting them, in their succession, might be open to the understanding of every man who would take the trouble of perusing and studying them; it was from this freedom of communication, I expected the kind of knowledge would be diffused, which could enable the Members of this House and the Nation at large, to examine and decide upon the propositions which I was to submit to the good sense and probity of the British Nation. The Legislature and the Public could then judge for themselves, what system of foreign and domestic government would be best suited to the Asiatic interests of their country."

"It is from knowledge of the subject alone, that I hope for, or could expect your support. Whether my opinions have been right or wrong upon particular subjects, is not now the question; but whether the knowledge, I have derived from



experience and communicated to you, is such, as to induce you, when you shall fairly and deliberately examine the propositions I am to lay before the House, to adopt them, or to honour them with your amendments, is the subject for your deliberation."

Mr. Dundas then proposed, that the Board of Commissioners should continue in its present Constitution, but with one change, viz. That His Majesty should have the power of promoting, to a seat at the Board, men who were not of His Privy Council. It was in the remembrance of many of the Members of the House, and it was known to them all, that at the period when the Board of Controul was instituted, the object was, that the Members composing it, should be selected from those high Departments of the State, where, as Officers of the Crown, they enjoyed emoluments which would compensate for the discharge of the new trust. It had been found, however, from experience, (whether this was to be referred to the other important charges committed to the Members of the Board, or whether to their aspiring at the greater Offices of State) that the changes at the Board had been too frequent to enable those who had the immediate responsibility, to derive the aid they might otherwise expect from their counsels and support.



Though no member who had held a seat at the Board had left it, without having done himself honour by his labour and attention, yet he could not help wishing for the aid of some members to this Board, whose situations might be considered as more permanent.

Having thus given his opinion of the foreign and domestic Government required for Indian Affairs, he could not but offer a public apology for differing in opinion, on the subject of the appointment to the Governments and Supreme Councils in India, from Lord Cornwallis, who recommended, that this power should be vested in the Crown. Two reasons had induced him to prefer the continuance of the present system. One was, that the Crown had the power of recalling these Officers, if their administration appeared to be directed by any but public measures. Another was, that a Minister might be prevailed upon from private motives, or by the solicitations from those whom it might be difficult to resist, to appoint persons whom he himself might not entirely approve of. The case, however, was widely different, when a Minister could only recommend a character to the judgment of twenty-four Persons. This check was a proper one on the Executive Power, and obviously tended to make the Directors careful in choosing a man, whose ap-



pointment they could offer to the Public. These were his reasons for recommending the continuance of the present mode of appointing to the governments in India, and he left them to the consideration of Parliament as an apology, why he had ventured to differ in opinion from the high authority to which he had referred.

MR. DUNDAS now proceeded to consider the subject of the East-India Trade, and stated the general question, *under what regulations ought the Trade to the East-Indies to be in future conducted?* He prefaced his observations upon this subject, by alluding to the difficulties, which upon it, as well as on the subject of government, he had experienced, from the influence of prevailing speculations and theory; but here, also he held it to be his duty to rely on experience alone. "I wish not (said he) to curb the spirit of commercial enterprize in a nation where it ought to be cherished and encouraged; on the contrary, I wish to give it its utmost scope, consistently with the safety of those who may engage in it, and with the general prosperity of the kingdom. Parliament has to hear the claims of all parties, to listen to the reasoning by which they support them, and to keep its judgment to one great object, the interest of the British Empire.

"If any branch of commerce (arrived at what-



ever height it may be) shall be made a subject of commercial argument, and the history of it not taken into view, like a law, the system of trade may seem to be obvious, while the application of it will be found impracticable. If the East-India trade of Britain is the greatest commercial concern which has yet occurred in the annals of polished nations, it is at the same time, the most striking example by which we could illustrate the force of the preceding experimental observation. Were a Member of this House merely to take up the account of the profits of the East-India trade, and then to fix his attention on the surplus revenues proposed to be divided between the Public and the Company, and without looking back to the vicissitudes through which the trade has passed for nearly two centuries; or examining the aids which the nation has given to prop up the credit of the East-India Company, as its commercial representative in Asia, I can suppose him embracing the opinion, that monopolies are baneful in their spirit, and exclusive privileges destructive in their tendency; and he has the authority of the first modern writers on commerce to support his plausible opinion. If, however, he will look back to the losses which the Company have experienced, or if he will examine the profits which, from time to time, they have drawn on their co-



capital stock, he will probably start back from his own speculations, and reflect and deliberate well, before he will give his voice for depriving them of their exclusive privileges."

In this place Mr. Dundas took an interesting retrospect of the history of the East-India trade, and the substance of his observations was nearly as follows: "The staples of Asia (he said), viz. spices and aromatics, precious stones, and wrought silks and cottons, had been in estimation among all the polished nations, and with all the great Sovereigns in the ancient and modern worlds. As the darkness which hung over Europe, during the middle ages, began to be dispelled, the same taste for the productions of the East, was created by the commercial efforts of the Italian Republics. By means of caravans and the navigation of rivers, the produce of India was brought to the shores of the Mediterranean, and carried from the ports of this sea, by the traders of Venice and Genoa, to the different countries in the North of Europe. The riches acquired by these Republics, in consequence of the exclusive privileges which they possessed, in the countries through which the Eastern commodities had to pass before they reached the Mediterranean; if it had given them the entire possession of the trade, at the same time tended to rouse the



spirit of enterprize and of discovery among the other European nations. In consequence of this prevailing spirit; the Portuguese under Vasco de Gama, discovered the passage to India, by the Cape of Good Hope, and in a short time, not only annihilated the trade of the Italian Republics, but acquired the trade and the settlements in India, which gave to Emmanuel an exclusive possession of all the wealth which the East could send to Europe.

“ About the latter end of the 16th century, the Dutch became independent of the Crown of Spain, and sent their armed ships to the East-Indies. In a few years they were the rivals and supplanters of the power and influence of the Portuguese, and at last erected their several, but connected East India Companies, carrying on the trade upon a joint stock, and under an exclusive privilege.

“ This spirit of commercial enterprize, in a short time, induced France to engage in the Asiatic trade, and, in imitation of the Dutch, to establish its East-India Company. The French, however, were not as yet acquainted with the principles upon which a foreign and distant trade could be established, having been accustomed only to a narrow traffic with their European neighbours.



“ During these important commercial transactions, England also became an eager competitor in the trade and navigation to the Eastern World. Possessed of more national ardour and equally persevering with the Dutch, emerging too from civil and religious thralldom, it determined to participate with the Portuguese and the Dutch commercial adventurers in the profits of the trade to the East Indies. Imitating the example of the other European nations, Queen Elizabeth gave a Charter to the *London Company* in 1600. At first, one or more of the adventurers were entitled to carry on the trade upon their own shares, but in a short time it was found necessary, to rest the whole of the concern upon a joint stock. In the succeeding reigns, the Crown frequently granted licences to individuals; and the London Company had to struggle not only against the foreign Companies of Europe, but against the English interlopers. At last a new Association was formed, under the name of the *English East-India Company*; the Charter of the London Association still remaining. It was soon, however, found, that two Companies belonging to the same nation, neither could carry on the trade with profit to themselves, nor for the interest of their country. The London Company had besides, purchased up the greatest part of the shares of the English;



the ruin of both would have followed, had not the whole subject been referred to Lord Cadogan, and had not, upon his award, the present *United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies*, been established. From this period to the middle of the present century, the trade to the East Indies had nothing peculiar to distinguish its character in Britain from other countries in Europe; the ships of the European Companies, in general, carried out bullion and produce, and brought back goods from India and China to be disposed of at our sales in London. Towards the middle of the present century, however, France formed the bold design of acquiring territorial possessions in India, and the struggle between the French and the English Companies terminated in our acquiring extensive provinces, yielding a revenue of many millions sterling, and comprehending about twenty millions of inhabitants. This triumph of England was sealed by the memorable peace of 1763. The House may easily form an idea of the state of our Asiatic commerce, at this juncture, from the following statement:

From 1761 to 1769, an average of ten years, there was paid for goods exported, £464,374; for goods re-exported, £152,009; the bills drawn on the East India



Directors amounted to £167,410; and the amount of the sales in Europe was £1,760,679.

From 1741 to 1747, on the average of six years, there was paid, for bullion exported, £567,238; for goods and stores exported, £189,411; the bills drawn on the Court of Directors amounted to £230,914; and the sales of goods amounted to £1,907,105.

From 1747 to 1757, on an average of ten years, there was paid, for bullion exported, £767,057; for goods and stores exported, £267,730; the bills drawn on the Court of Directors amounted to £164,482; and the sales of goods amounted to £2,143,459.

From 1757 to 1767, on an average of ten years, there was paid, for bullion exported, £121,287; for goods and stores exported, £428,767; the bills drawn on the Court of Directors amounted to £432,891; and the sales of goods amounted to £2,315,573.

Mr. Dundas, having thus given a View of the Company's Affairs, when their situation was merely commercial, or changing to the novel character of delegated Sovereigns drawing Revenues from rich Provinces, to be realised in Britain through the medium of trade, (after again adverting to the magnitude of our possessions, and to the acquisition of the Duannec)



observed, that the Company was the instrument of Government, remitting a revenue which was to furnish a capital for trade, exclusively of the exports upon which they had formerly depended. Adverting again to the laudable interferences of Parliament to obtain, upon evidence, a knowledge of the actual value of the British Possessions in India, and to the successive regulations in different Acts, down to the period when the present System of Controul was established, in 1784; he concluded, "That the Company had now become the organ by which the Indian Empires of Britain ought to be administered."

Upon this system Mr. Dundas remarked, there were a variety of opinions: by one set of men it was maintained, that it was a political absurdity, to entrust to a Commercial Association, the Government of an Empire; since the very nature of this power rendered it impracticable for the Company's servants, either to conduct commerce upon proper principles, or to govern our subjects in India wisely or well. "But is it not true, said he, that the revenues of India must pass to Britain through the medium of trade? Is it not true, that the manufacturers of Britain, whether we view them as exporting produce wrought up from the materials of our



own country, or as drawing their gains from produce that depends on raw materials imported from the East, have become rich? Is it not true, that the tribute from India cannot be realised in Britain, with safety to the State, through any other medium, but that of a regulated trade? Is it not true, that from the acquisition of the Duannce to the present times (particularly since the controul of the Executive Power has been successfully employed to prevent abuses in the administration of the Government and Revenues of India) that the trade has been rapidly improving and increasing, and that Parliament have had annually the evidence of this fact before them? The inference is obvious, that in the trade, as well as in the government of India, Experience may be at variance with plausible Speculation; but that in trade, as well as in government, we must rely on practice."

Here Mr. Dundas laid before the House the following interesting statement; by which, he observed, the increase of the trade, since the acquisition of the Duannce, would be fully illustrated.

From 1767 to 1777, on an average of ten years, there was paid, for bullion exported, £110,042; for goods and stores exported,



£489,081; the amount of the bills drawn on the Court of Directors was £458,368; and of the sales in Europe £3,329,136.

From 1777 to 1784, on an average of seven years, there was paid for bullion £5,653; for goods and stores exported £500,089; the bills drawn on the Court of Directors amounted to £761,425; and the sales of goods to £3,185,556.

From 1784 to 1790, on an average of five years, there was paid, for bullion exported, £617,930; for goods and stores exported, £635,145; the bills drawn on the Court of Directors amounted to £1,551,985; and the sales of goods amounted to £4,572,466.

From 1790 to 1793, on an average of three years, there was paid for bullion exported, £466,893; for goods and stores exported, £935,776; the bills drawn on the Court of Directors amounted to £668,366; and the sales of goods amounted to £5,103,094.

Having thus explained, upon evidence, what the existing interests of Britain are in India, Mr. Dundas proceeded to examine the arguments which had been laid before him upon the subject of the open trade.

In the first place, he had been told that the revenue might pass through the medium of the Company, though their exclusive privileges



were to cease and determine; and if this were not admitted, that the revenue might be distributed among the private merchants, and through them be realised in Britain, as safely as through the Company. Before he could assent to either of these opinions, it became necessary for him to advert to the consequences of admitting them. "I am of opinion," said he, "after viewing the magnitude of the revenue and of the surplus, after discovering the degree in which the public is to participate of it, and after having had it proved to me, upon evidence, that the Company is the most safe vehicle through which the remittances of this surplus can be made, either to itself or to the public, that it would be unwise to try the experiment of resorting to any other system.

"But allowing that the open trade might become a means of realising the revenue in Britain, there were consequences both to Britain and to India which might result from the experiment, and they would readily be foreseen by the House. If the inhabitants of Britain were to be permitted freely to emigrate to India, colonisation must necessarily take place." Mr. Dundas wished, therefore, to know whether this was an experiment that ought to be tried? and whether the proofs which we have had of the



pernicious effects of emigration would not be multiplied by such a measure. Setting aside, however, this probable evil, the more obvious one of the effect of colonization upon India itself must be deliberately examined, before we can adventure to authorize it. "All the gentlemen," he said, "who have resided in India, with whom I have conversed, and all the information which I have received from those at present in the most important stations in India, either political or commercial, agree, that an unrestrained liberty to the Europeans to emigrate to and to settle among the Indians, would in a short time, annihilate the respect paid to the British character, and ruin our Indian empire. Indeed we have only to advert to what must be the situation of the settlers and of the natives, and we shall at once discover, that this opinion has a solid foundation."

If numbers were to emigrate to India, they must find out habitations and occupations in that country. In acquiring the former they must drive the natives from the spots upon which they and their forefathers have lived; and in pursuing the latter, the rivalry would enhance the price of labour, to the degree, which would soon render the profits from Indian imports almost nothing. But supposing these to be only



probable mischiefs, there is one which is certain, and which materially affects the preservation of our Indian empire. An indiscriminate and unrestrained colonization would destroy that respect, or rather eradicate that feeling, which is so general among the natives, of the superiority of the European character. It is a fact, that upon this feeling of the superiority of the Europeans the preservation of our empire depends, and it is owing to the limited number of them, and to their being the covenanted servants of the Company, or licensed inhabitants, that the idea of the superiority is so general, or that it is so effectual a means of administering the government of our provinces. "I cannot," said he, "illustrate these observations better, than by referring to the correspondence between Mr. Cossim and Mr. Vansittart; the Nabob complained to this Governor, that the natives were oppressed and harassed by numbers of vagrant Europeans; thinking, perhaps, that the Nabob was alarmed without reason, Mr. Vansittart replied, that these Europeans were too contemptible to deserve notice; 'They may be contemptible,' answered the Nabob, 'in your opinion, but the dog of an European is of consequence among the timid natives of this country.' If, then, the superiority of the European character



must be maintained in India, it is impossible for us to think of authorising an unrestrained emigration."

There is one view of the subject which must forcibly strike every man's observation the moment it is brought before the House. Adventurers, finding their hopes disappointed, and that the fortunes they had promised themselves existed only in their own imagination, being too without resource, might seek and would find employment in the armies of the Mahrattahs and of Tippoo Sultan. "Would it be wise, then, to fill the armies of our rivals in India with recruits from Europe, or can we suppose that the open trader would conscientiously hesitate to supply the native powers with the military stores, by which their armies might first resist us, and then wrest from us the empire which we possess?"

In the next place, Mr. Dundas stated, that he had been told the exports of British produce would be increased if the trade were laid open. However specious this opinion might appear, it became necessary that Parliament should know the fact, and for this purpose he would select two or three articles of what might certainly be considered as the principal articles of British manufacture. Woollens would be allowed to be the first



of our staple commodities. It was easy for the speculator, while he merely considered the extent of our dominions in India, and that they were inhabited by twenty millions of our subjects, to fancy that here he would find unbounded sales for his goods; but he reflected not that the climate was against the wear of woollens, he reflected not that the religious prejudices of many of the casts of the natives forbade their using them; he knew not, perhaps, that the dress of the natives is as fixed and local as their manners. It was easy, also, for the speculator to suppose, that in such a country as India he could find a market for any quantity of earthenware, but he did not reflect on the bulk of the commodity; he had not estimated the amount of the freight of it, or if he had, perhaps he did not know that the religious prejudices of many of the casts forbade their using what had been fabricated by the impure hands of infidel strangers. It was easy, in like manner, for the speculator to imagine, that if he could find a sale for his cottons in India, his riches would keep pace with his desires; but did he hope to rival his master in an art in which he was only an imitator, or could he expect (comparing the high price of labour in Europe with the low price of it in India) that he could undersell him



there? There were some articles of Europe manufactured cottons, which, from the superior taste and elegance of the patterns, might find a sale in India, and he hoped they would increase; but, from the nature of the case, the superiority of the Indian manufactures must remain with the natives. "I mention these particulars," said Mr. Dundas, "merely to moderate the expectations which have been entertained in consequence of the speculation of an open trade to India."

In the third place, Mr. Dundas observed, that it had been a favourite topic of late to declaim against monopolies, and to confound what was truly a monopoly with the exclusive privilege of the East-India Company. A monopoly, he observed, gives to individuals, or to associations, the power of bringing what quantity of goods they may chuse into the market, and of affixing on them whatever price their avarice may suggest. The House, however, would at once distinguish between this narrow aspect of a monopoly and an exclusive privilege given by the legislature to a company, proceeding upon a capital equal to the magnitude of the concern, and subject to regulation and to public controul. This distinction being admitted, the legislature will not be disposed rashly to change a current which is turning the greatest wheel of British com-



merce, which is giving food to industry, and wealth to regulated enterprise, and which is about to become, independently of what we draw from duties and customs, one of the resources of the nation.

It had been of late a fashion, in our manufacturing towns, to hold meetings, and to come to resolutions, that the exclusive privilege of the East-India Company was a monopoly, and that it was for the interest of the manufacturers this monopoly should be done away. "I would wish to ask the projectors of such resolutions, whether they have examined what the Company has been, and what they now are? To whom did they owe the riches which they had acquired from the cotton manufactures?—to the East-India Company! To whom had Britain been indebted for a great increase of its shipping?—to the East-India Company! If from other sources our industry and navigation have been increased, the original obligation is not, on that account, the less, and ought not to be forgotten. Some small gratitude, surely, is due for all these benefits."

In estimating the merits of the East-India Company, Mr. Dundas stated his wishes, that those who form a different opinion, from that which he entertained on the subject, would examine accurately what was the real proportion



of gain, from the India trade, received by the Proprietors of East-India stock. It ought to be remembered on this subject, that the capital is now five millions, and the whole dividend, in compensation for such a capital, and for all the risks and dangers which have repeatedly attended the trade, is not more than £400,000, out of a sum of no less than £3,750,000, which is portioned out among various other interests. Of this sum, the merchants and ship-owners annually receive about £850,000; the charges of merchandizes amount to £350,000; the goods exported, including private trade, at the most moderate computation, do not amount to less than £1,550,000, and the customs and duties paid to the Public are more than a million annually. Such being the distribution of the returns on the India trade, it would be absurd to impute to the East-India Company, any charge of receiving exorbitant gains, at the expence of the Public or of individuals of any description. In fact, they have not received, nor are they likely to receive the legal interest of the money, daily paid as the price of their stock. It is believed, few individuals would be satisfied with such a return on a commercial capital, and it behoves thinking men to consider well, before they allow themselves to be led away by general declamation on topics



which are totally foreign and inapplicable to the subject.

Mr. Dundas then proceeded to call the attention of the House to the probable state of the East-India Company, supposing it possessed of no exclusive trade to India. "I am afraid, said he, that many persons, who indulge themselves with the sanguine hope of great emoluments, arising out of an open trade to India, do not advert to the state of the East-India Company, independently of its exclusive rights. If the exclusive charter should expire in 1794, still the Company would be a body corporate in perpetuity, and entitled to trade upon its joint stock. To whom, in this case, would the most important seats of trade in India belong? to the Company undoubtedly. Under their original and perpetual charters, they have legally purchased or acquired Fort St. George, St. Helena, Bombay, and Calcutta, and long before they were possessed of territories, or of the Duannee. These possessions are their patrimonial property, and cannot be taken from them. Fort. St. George was made a settlement by the Old Company in 1620, St. Helena in 1651, Bombay in 1668, Calcutta and Fort William in 1689. Upon the whole, exclusive of the Duannee, they have an unalienable right to valuable landed possessions, amounting at least,



to £250,000 per annum. In addition to these, the whole factories and commercial establishments, both in India and in the Eastern Seas, undoubtedly belong to them. Agreeably to the principles he had already detailed, Mr. Dundas observed, that he must take for granted, that the government and territorial revenues are to remain with the East-India Company, and of course, that they must be considered as possessed of all the capital, and of the consequent advantages likely to arise from being the remitters of the public revenue, and these were equal in amount to the whole tribute which India can afford to pay to this Country. Under these circumstances he might surely ask whether any individual would hazard his trade, in an hostile competition with the East-India Company? And whether it would not be rash to disturb the established system of commerce, when there were forcible reasons for continuing it, and scarcely any argument in favor of a contrary system. This topic he felt to be invidious, and therefore he declined enlarging upon it, he would however take the liberty of suggesting to those who were disposed to pursue an investigation of this subject, whether the Indian trade of the foreign European nations did not, from its actual state, tend to confirm the opinion, that it would be unavailing in the private trader to



enter into a rival competition in the trade to India against the East-India Company of Great Britain.

Before the passing of the Commutation Act, some of the private merchants had had an opportunity of drawing profits from a contraband trade in tea to Great Britain, but since that event this source of profit had been nearly exhausted, and he believed, that those, who had recently endeavoured to draw profits from it, had from their losses, receded from the enterprize.

Having thus considered what the British Indian trade is as a monopoly (if that term shall still be considered with an exclusive privilege), Mr. Dundas took an interesting historical retrospect of what it had been, when that monopoly had been interrupted. During a considerable part of the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, he observed, that the private traders had not only been allowed to try the experiment of the India trade, but authorized by a commission, in 1654-5, to engage in it. The trade from this period to 1657, therefore, might be considered as open and free; several circumstances had contributed to prejudice the Protector against monopolies. The most distinguished writers on trade in England had inveighed against them; and in particular against the monopoly of the East-India Company, while the authors on the same subject, in Holland, had de-



fended the privileges of their East-India Companies, the disputes too, between the Dutch and English East-India Companies, from 1620 to the treaty which Oliver dictated in 1654, probably prejudiced him against Companies of every kind. It appears, however, that upon the trade being opened in England, the Dutch took an unnecessary alarm. In Thurloe's State Papers there is an interesting letter from Oliver's Envoy at the Hague, intimating, " that the Merchants at Amsterdam considered the opening of the navigation and commerce to the East-Indies, to be a measure that would injure the East-India Companies of Holland." Though Cromwell opened the trade for four years, the experiment soon convinced him, that his own measure was as rash, as the jealousies and apprehensions of the Dutch were unfounded. In three years he discovered, that the Company's trade, (for he did not prohibit them from a competition with the private adventurers) was almost ruined, and that the Dutch had taken the opportunity of seizing on Calicut, on Columbo in the Island of Ceylon, on Manarr, and Jesnapatnam. Cromwell therefore, in this instance, found it expedient to alter his opinion, (though that person, it will be allowed, was not in the habit of giving up his prejudices) and to restore the charter in 1657. What is singular



enough, in this event, is, that the private traders themselves were the first to petition the Protector to restore the Company's Charter; and what shews the rashness of the measure, in the strongest degree, is, that when the Company were re-established, upon a joint stock of £739,782, only 50 per cent. of this sum was subscribed for, and deemed the capital stock of the Company. If Charles II. in 1660 renewed the Company's Charter, his wants, as well as those of James II., led them to grant licences to individuals, the majority of whom became bankrupt.

A similar experiment, though to a less extent, was tried some years afterwards. In 1683, on the failure of the payment of a paltry duty, a handle was made to cut down the Charter of the old East-India Company; and for a loan of two millions, at 8 per cent. the general Society, or *English East-India Company*, was established by a Charter, the terms of which gave to this incorporated body a right either to trade on their separate shares in the capital, or to unite together as a joint stock, the shares of as many individual Proprietors as chose to carry on the trade in that manner. Here therefore a fair opportunity was given to make the experiment of trading as private, or individual adventurers, or upon a joint stock. In a short time, this last method of trad-



ing was found to be so preferable a system, that when the two Companies were united, not more than £7,000 remained belonging to the separate Traders of the general Society. The inference from these events is, that not only the experience of other nations, but that of our ancestors, prove to us, the danger of the speculation of an open East-India trade.

Having thus examined what the trade is with an exclusive privilege, and what it was, when this privilege was interrupted, Mr. Dundas entered into an examination of the complaints which had been brought against the East-India Company. It had been said, that the Company having a capital provided for them in India, are less anxious than they ought to be, in enlarging their export trade, and that thus they did not sufficiently encourage the industry of the manufacturers. It had been said, that they were not sufficiently attentive in bringing home the proper quantity of the raw materials required by our manufacturers. It had been said that they have not provided for the remittance of the fortunes of individuals from India, by means of trade, and that the effect of the inattention of the Company, in these respects, had been to create a clandestine trade, injurious to the commerce, the revenues, and the navigation of Great Britain.



On the first of these subjects, Mr. Dundas observed, that since the acquisition of the territorial revenues, and particularly since the last peace, the exports from Britain had been greatly increased, and by the measures which he was to propose for the consideration of the House, he did not doubt but that the export trade would be carried on, as far as the demands in India would bear.

On the second of these objections, he stated, that the imports of raw materials to Britain amounted to £700,000 annually, and though this might not be the quantity required, it must be allowed, that the Company had made meritorious efforts. Means however would be proposed, for enabling the manufacturer to supply himself with raw materials, through the Company's ships, as well as at their sales.

On the third of these objections, he observed, that the difficulty of sending home private fortunes would be admitted ; but that the error was in the Legislature, not in the Company. By an Act of Parliament, the Company were limited, in their acceptance of bills, to £300,000 in any one year ; but this error would be done away, by the plan of remitting the debts of the Company from India, and making them payable in Britain.



On the last of these subjects he observed, that it was connected originally with the error of prohibiting the remittance of fortunes from India, because these had furnished capitals to clandestine traders ; but as he meant to propose that the Company should be obliged to provide shipping at a moderate rate of freight, to carry out goods to India, for all those who might chuse to enter into the trade, and to bring home raw materials for the manufacturer, he considered that the fortunes of individuals would find an easy and a safe channel of remittance to Britain, and doubted not, but that the experiment of extending the export and import trade, would do away the temptations to engage in the clandestine trade, and would, in fact, annihilate it. “ In this way, said Mr. Dundas, I trust that I shall not have been found inattentive to the mercantile interests of the British Nation at large, nor to those of the East-India Company ; I doubt not, but that the plan which I have adopted, and at last arranged with the East-India Company, will meet with the approbation of the Public. To those who have been looking to the subject, in one point of view only, and, in fancy, imagining to themselves the rewards of their speculations, I cannot expect to give satisfaction ; but if Parliament shall disappoint them



in their unreasonable expectations from speculation, it will, at the same time, in preventing them from dissipating the wealth they possess, have insured to them their fortunes, and been the guardian of the patrimony of the Nation. My plan is to engraft an open trade upon the exclusive privilege of the Company; and to prove by experiment, first, how far the complaints, to which I have referred, are well founded; and next, how far it is practicable to cure the evil, without injury to the Public. We thus may not only prevent the commercial adventurer of England or Ireland from being borne down by the Company in an hostile competition, but afford to them, in their enterprizes and speculations, its fostering protection."

Mr. Dundas concluded with apologizing to the House for having so long detained them upon a subject, into which commercial men, or commercial economists, can only be supposed to enter; "but a British Legislature, he said, have to reflect, that our commercial resources are immense; that whatever can preserve them, or add to them, is preserving and adding to the greatness of the Empire; that in vain we shall look at the envied situation in which we are placed in Europe; in vain we shall expect permanency of respect to the British Power and Character,



among nations, removed from us nearly half the circumference of the world ; that in vain we shall, at the expense of treasure and of blood, have founded and consolidated an Indian Empire ; in vain we shall be seeking to open the markets of China, for the encouragement of the skill, the industry, and the enterprize of the British Artizan, Merchant and Navigator ; that in vain we shall have devised a system of Government, and judicial, financial and military powers to support it, if we do not, with these efforts, listen to the claims of the Company, who have actively promoted the interest and greatness of their Country ; if we do not connect with the confidence which we propose to place in them, encouragements suited to the claims of the respectable and numerous manufacturers, whose skill, whose wealth, and whose enterprize have seconded and rewarded their own, and the efforts of the greatest mercantile association in the world : an association, who have been supported by, and are about reciprocally to support their protectors : an association, who, from their spirit of enterprize and liberality of commercial principles, are ready to forward every laudable, but regulated enterprize of their fellow subjects.

“ I own, that next to the interests of my



country, the prosperity of the East-India Company, in the management of whose business I have had my share, claims my first public regard; and I shall feel it to be the most honourable moment of my life, if I have suggested opinion to the Legislature, leading to a system of Indian Affairs, for the general advantage of Great Britain.

“ In my present statement I have referred only to an explanation of the leading principles which govern my opinion. It will readily occur to the House, that there are many points which, in detail, will require minute explanation; I shall, therefore, without formally moving any resolutions, have them printed; and, on Monday next, submit them to the Committee, who may continue the consideration of them, from day to day, till they shall come to a decision upon this great national subject. ”

\* 1741

FINIS.



A  
SHORT CONVERSATION  
ON  
THE PRESENT CRISIS  
OF  
*THE IMPORTANT TRADE*  
WITH THE  
EAST INDIES.

---

LONDON:  
Printed for BLACK, PARRY, and Co. Leadenhall Street

---

1813.

*Price 1s.*







## ADVERTISEMENT.



IN this little performance there is nothing original ; nothing but what has already been advanced by the supporters of the contending interests, whose most prominent assertions are here collected, and compressed into a few pages, for the convenience of those, who cannot, or will not, bestow attention to the facts and arguments of more extensive publications.



The Speakers in the Conversation are:—

**SILVESTER**, *a magistrate of an inland manufacturing town;*

**AN ADVENTURER**, *proposing to trade to India;*

**A PRIVATE MERCHANT**, *already engaged in the India  
trade;*

**A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN;**

**A MODERATE MAN;**

**A SHOPKEEPER**, *proposing to trade to India;*

*and*

**A COTTON MANUFACTURER.**



## SHORT CONVERSATION.

---

*Silvester.* WELL, my good friend, I am now in hopes to have soon the pleasure of congratulating you on the abolition of “this most baleful of all monopolies,” which excludes the free subjects of this commercial empire from the commerce of five hundred millions of souls, inhabiting countries of every climate in the vast extent of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, in fact from three fifths of the globe, and confines us to the petty trade of the Atlantic with its islands and inlets.

*Adventurer.* I trust we are now in a fair way to recover the free exercise of the imprescriptible rights, which have been withheld from us above two centuries : and then the merchants, manufacturers, and seamen, in every part of the country, will find full employment for their capital and their industry, by which they will enrich themselves and all around them. What say you, who are an old East-India merchant ?

*Private Merchant.* I must confess, I am not quite so sanguine as you appear to be respecting the



consequence of extending the trade in the manner you expect. In our first endeavours to obtain a participation of the trade, we declaimed upon the evils of allowing the remittance of the private fortunes of individuals to be made under neutral flags; and we proceeded to cry up the imprescriptible rights of free commerce. But we never imagined that government would think of licencing the importation of India goods into every creek and corner of Great Britain and Ireland; a measure which would infallibly open a door to uncontrollable smuggling, ruin all the inexperienced adventurers, and derange, perhaps destroy, the whole system of a trade, which has been a principal means of raising this country to the zenith of commercial prosperity and naval power.

*Advent.* Ay, ay, you are like the East-India Company: you have got a good slice of the trade to yourself, and you are unwilling to let us come in for a share. You say, we shall be ruined. I see no reason to doubt of success: and if we chuse to run the risk of being ruined, what is that to any body! What think you, squire?

*Country Gentleman.* I don't pretend to understand the matter; but I must say, I don't much like the Company. Some years ago they imported a vast quantity of rice in order to keep down the price of corn, to the great injury of the farmers of this country, and consequently of us landholders; and moreover in opposition to that wise act of the



legislature, which directed a bounty to be paid on the exportation of corn, for the express purpose of keeping the price from falling too low. Was not that a very unfair proceeding, Mr. Moderate? Why should not the farmer's commodity find its fair price as well as the merchant's?

*Moderate.* If the East-India Company's privilege is to be abolished, you may be at ease with respect to that matter. For assuredly no individual, nor any other company, ever will, or can, make such a generous and patriotic sacrifice of their property for the benevolent purpose of saving the people of this country from starving: for any one may know that rice brought from India, even if sold at a good price, can never pay the freight of so long a voyage.

*Priv. Merch.* Every friend of mankind must wish that no such occasion for importing rice from India may ever recur. But that has no concern with the question now under discussion, which is—whether the trade of India shall remain in the hands of the India Company, with a modified participation in favour of private traders residing in any part of Great Britain or Ireland, but with the restriction of the returns being brought to London only,—or it shall be laid as open as any other trade, every one conducting his outward and inward voyages, and his sales, as he thinks proper. On this subject I should be glad to hear your opinion, Mr. Moderate, as I know you have bestowed much attention upon Indian affairs.



*Mod.* The question is much more important than most people, in their indifference, and consequently their ignorance, suppose it to be. It is not merely a question of commercial profit between the Company and those who are now flattering themselves with the hopes of building up their own fortunes upon the ruin of the Company; but a question involving the preservation or perdition of the British empire in India, the happiness or misery of fifty millions of natives of that country, and also the security or destruction of the constitution of the British empire at home. But, as the object of the merchants of the outports is only to obtain a share of the trade, which, they say, is unjustly withheld from them, let us confine ourselves to the consideration of the trade: and that is a subject, respecting which it is the duty of every man, at least every man of liberal education, and every man who has a stake in the constitution, or in the welfare, of the British empire, to obtain proper information; and it is also his duty to make the most strenuous exertions in his power to support that side which, in his matured opinion, shall appear to merit support. The India trade has been brought to its present degree of perfection by a succession of experiments, made at a vast expense on every coast of the vast Indian Ocean, and gradually brought to a regular system by the accumulated wisdom of the most enlightened members of the Company during upwards of two centuries.



Those who now desire to become East-India merchants certainly possess no such advantages.

*Silv.* But they possess capital, energy, and vigilant attention to their own individual interest, with which the jog-trot routine of the hired servants of the great overgrown Company can never come in competition : and I am warranted, by the respectable authority of Dr. Smith, to say, that the Company will soon be weary of keeping up a competition with the vastly superior activity of the private traders, who will soon display the British flag in innumerable ports, where it was never seen before, and raise the trade from its present paltry annual amount of one million sterling in exports and imports, producing duties to the trifling amount of two hundred thousand pounds, to an annual amount of ten millions of exports only, and an import still larger by all the advance in the sale of the outward cargo. Thus the revenue will be increased, and the trade and revenue will go on in a continual progress of increasing prosperity.

*Mod.* There can be no doubt that, if the trade is thrown open to the extent now seemingly, though, I trust, not seriously, in contemplation, there will be an immediate increase of demand for British manufactures to be exported to India. But, as it is ascertained that every market in the Eastern Ocean is already overstocked with British goods, it is evident that they cannot be sold, and must be left in the hands of consignees. Thence it follows,



that many of the manufacturers will not be paid; the new trade will immediately be at an end; and the regular export trade of the Company and their officers will be suspended for some years, till the Oriental markets are cleared from the overload of British goods, either by sale or by perishing. The adventurers will probably ship as much bullion, an article, however, not very easily to be found at present at any price, as they can procure, and that will be their only fund for laying in their return cargo, the cost of which will be raised enormously high by their competition. When the ships come home, then will be felt the distress proceeding from the boasted increase of the trade. Then the competition of the importers in Bristol, Liverpool, Hull, Whitehaven, Glasgow, &c. and of the smugglers in all the remote creeks, from Cornwall to Caithness, will give to British consumers (for no foreign merchants nor their agents will travel to those small and unassorted sales) the advantage of buying India goods at prices very much under the cost: an advantage which a late writer on the Wealth of Nations, whom you have just now quoted, would have reckoned the *summum bonum* of commercial prosperity, but which will involve the misguided adventurers and their unfortunate creditors in bankruptcy and wide-spreading ruin. Besides, let us not forget that the Company, though they should resolve to abandon the trade to the scramble of the new adventurers as long as it lasts,



have a great stock of Oriental goods of every kind in their warehouses, of which there are to the value of about three millions and a half, which were offered for sale, and laid aside for want of buyers at the last March sales, the exportation to the Continent, which used to take off about three fourths of the imports from India being now almost annihilated by the war : and to these and the other goods in the warehouses are to be added the cargoes of all the ships now on their voyages. It is also for the consideration of the new adventurers, how their import goods, should they even be in very moderate quantities, will be able to stand a competition for quality with those of the Company, the established character of which will command a preference with all buyers acquainted with their business, whether domestic or foreign. Thus it is evident, that there is no need, and no room, for an extension of the trade ; and that there will be no great addition to the revenue from the importation of goods, which cannot be sold.

*Adv.* Well, we will take our chance of the Company's competition, which cannot long stand against our energy and unremitting activity, every man pushing for himself. Besides, they are drowned in debt for money taken up at twelve per cent. in India to purchase their goods, which they will never be able to discharge, and that alone is sufficient to knock them up.

*Mod.* It is well known that the Company are



most punctual in their payments. Pray, did you ever know, or did you ever hear of, any person calling on the Company for money that was due, and not receiving immediate payment? You will please to observe, moreover, that the debt, which now presses so heavy on the Company's home treasury, has no connection with their commerce, and indeed, fairly speaking, no connection with the Company, having been created in India for political purposes, in consequence of the war in Europe having stirred up wars in India, which have been carried on, at an enormous expense, by the influence of councils, over which the Company had no controul. Very large sums of these political debts have been transferred from India to England by draughts upon the Company's commercial finances at home, which are so flourishing as not only to answer all demands upon themselves, but even to spare a large assistance to the reduction of the territorial debt. So this debt, which the enemies of the Company most unfairly and maliciously adduce as a proof of mismanagement, is a most splendid proof of the flourishing state of their commercial funds, and of the prudent conduct of the Directors. They could very easily discharge all the mass of territorial debt now pressing upon their commercial finances, if they could obtain a fair settlement of the debt owing to them by Government, amounting to about ten millions and a half, independent of what is justly due to them for the difference above the contract price



upon the quantity of saltpetre supplied to Government beyond what was agreed for, and for the outlay upon sunn hemp at the desire of Government. Will the new merchants furnish saltpetre and sunn hemp to Government at such prices as the Company have done? Can Government depend upon them for a regular supply at any price? If there is a deficiency of these articles of the first necessity in warfare, how are you to carry on your war? Will any of the new East-India merchants carry out woollen cloths, tin, and other articles, on which there is a certainty of a loss, merely for the patriotic purpose of supporting the manufacturers and miners, as the Company do? Are those, who desire to supplant the Company, willing, or are they able, to indemnify the revenue for the defalcation of duties, as the Company actually did, to the amount of near half a million, when, in order to prevent smuggling, they obtained a reduction of the duties upon tea in the year 1767?

*Count. Gent.* I think you said, Sir, that every man having a stake in the country is interested in the present question respecting the India trade. I must beg leave to differ from you; and I shall leave the Company and the new claimants of a participation of the trade to battle it out. What signifies it to me, for example, whether the muslin worn by my wife and my daughters, or the tea we drink, be imported by a great company, or by merchants in the



outports, who are perhaps nearer to our residence in the country?

*Mod.* It has been a very common opinion among country gentlemen, that they have no concern in the prosperity of the commercial and labouring part of the community. But give me leave to tell you, that they have the greatest and deepest concern: for if the trade of the country is ruined, the manufacturers and all connected with them must be ruined, and consequently your farmers must be ruined, and your rents be no longer paid. The commercial and manufacturing people will first feel the distress, and will thus have the first warning to carry their knowledge, their arts, and their industry, together with their property, to other countries, where they may hope to enjoy more ample means of employing them to advantage. The landed man, who thinks himself secure in the possession of the most valuable and desirable of all kinds of property, is perhaps not wakened from his dream of security, till the farmers tell him, that they cannot sell their produce, and consequently cannot pay him any rent. Thus he finds himself, by the operation of causes, with which he supposed himself totally unconnected, tied down to an unproductive property, which nobody will buy from him at any price. But, suppose the country should not be so completely ruined as to come to this extremity of distress, how will you like to contribute your proportion of above four millions sterling, raised at



present, at almost no expense, upon the trade of the East-India Company, besides the income tax upon their dividends, the direct and indirect taxes paid by themselves and the many thousands supported in their employment, and the benefit of having the use of £4,200,000 at an interest far below what is paid on other loans, all which may moderately be estimated at £1,300,000 annually, to say nothing of the many heavy sums paid into the Exchequer at various times, which have relieved the national burthens, and an annual half million, which would have been payable to the Exchequer, if the nation had not been at war during the last twenty years. Of all these vast sums there must be almost a total defalcation; or more probably the expense of the new establishments for making war upon the smugglers will greatly exceed the sum, which can be levied upon the trade in its dispersed and decayed state. For that great deficiency and new expense provision must, *if possible*, be made by new demands upon the stock and industry of the country: and, as the rents of land and houses, and the interest upon tangible monied capital, both of which are derived from the industry of the people, are the most accessible objects of taxation, you must expect a very heavy proportion of the new taxes to fall upon your land, and the payment to be most rigorously exacted as long as land produces any income to the proprietor.

*Count. Gent.* I must own that I have not bestow-



ed any thought upon such matters : but what you have now said demands very serious consideration.

*Siv.* Don't you be frightened at such a picture of what will never come to pass. A likely story, indeed, that trade is to be ruined by the extension of it. Why, if the trade were fairly laid open to the free exertions of individual enterprize, as it certainly ought to be, we should soon see the export of the manufactures of a single hive of British industry equal the whole exports of this monstrous monopolizing Company, who have at all times stunted the trade, that they might get great profits upon their small capital ; and who, though they are guarded by the armour of exclusive privilege, are carrying on a losing trade, upon which others would, however, make a profit ; whose imports have fallen to one half within these ten years ; and yet they obstinately persist in carrying on this losing trade rather than let it go into the hands that would manage it to advantage.

*Mod.* You must really give me leave to say, Sir, that, for a man asserting so positively as you do, you are exceedingly incorrect in your statements ; and I can partly perceive by what kind of authorities you are misled. How could you allow a pamphleteer to persuade you that the annual revenue derived from the imports and exports of the Company amounts only to £200,000, when authentic documents, to which you might have had access, would have informed you that it amounts to twenty times



that sum? What sort of information could induce you to state the annual amount of the imports and exports of the Company at one million? You might have known, if you had properly inquired, that their annual exports of one kind of goods, woollen manufactures, to China only, is about one million, and sometimes more. As to your prediction of the happy effects of an unbounded extension of the trade, I shall reply to it in the words of that great merchant and statesman, Mr. Necker, addressed to the Abbé Morellet, an advocate for opening the India Trade of France—*“ You set up theory against experience, and possibilities against facts.”*—I do not, however, mean to put the French East-India Company upon any footing of equality or comparison with the East-India Company of this country. They drew large sums from the public treasury: our Company have poured many millions into the public treasury, besides supporting many thousands of families in this country, and animating the general commerce of it in a degree unequalled by any other Company in the world.

*Silv.* I pay no attention to these imposing statements, which are derived from the Company's own account.

*Mod.* You may, if you please, deny the truth of accounts extracted from the books of the Customs-House, and sanctioned by Parliament, so not resting upon the faith of the Company, which,



however, is above suspicion. And you may re-echo the pretended statements, which have been confidently fabricated for the purpose of injuring the Company in the estimation of the public and the legislature. But you can no more substantiate them than you can disprove the others.

*Silv.* We are not to be deterred from prosecuting the undoubted right which every British subject has to avail himself of every branch of commerce, either by accounts made up to serve a purpose, or by the dreadful picture you have drawn of imaginary ruin as the consequence of an extension of the trade. On the contrary, we know that by means of the extension the national wealth and naval greatness will rapidly arrive at an unexampled height of prosperity and grandeur.

*Mod.* The naval greatness of the nation certainly does not need to be raised above its present height. But if it did, I must say, that the destruction of the East-India marine, which has so long been a principal support of the naval power of the empire, and of itself constitutes a most respectable naval force, does not seem the most promising means of accomplishing it.

*Silv.* What! do not the East-India ships, those floating palaces fitted up for the superb accommodation of Nabobs, rather than the economical conveyance of merchandize, draw off a prodigious number of seamen from the service of the country? "The American ships of eight hundred tons bur-



“ then navigate the Eastern seas with from seven  
 “ to twenty seamen for their crew, whilst the ships  
 “ of the East-India Company, for political and  
 “ military purposes of one kind or other, carry  
 “ from one hundred to one hundred and forty  
 “ seamen.”

*Mod.* Surely, my good Sir, you must be thinking of the vessels you have seen upon the canals in the heart of England. What American port ever fitted out a ship of eight hundred tons for any commercial voyage whatever? As for such a ship going on an East-India voyage. or indeed any vessel that can be called a ship sailing even on a short voyage with seven men, there is not a sailor boy, or even any boy bred in a seaport town, that would not laugh at an assertion so monstrously absurd. Instead of the wonderful increase of naval greatness which you foresee, it is evident that, if the extended East-India trade, which you desire, could possibly subsist for a few years, the shipping of the country, our importers of the riches of the most distant regions, our safeguard, and our pride, must be reduced to a baneful swarm of smugglers and revenue cutters.

*Advent.* The ministers of Government have declared, that every precaution will be taken to prevent smuggling.

*Mod.* I have every proper respect for Government. But no government can perform impossibilities: and I know that it will be absolutely



impossible to prevent smuggling valuable light articles, though a thousand revenue cutters were constantly cruising, and though the many thousands of miles of the shores of the three kingdoms were lined with revenue officers within a call of one another; an expense which no revenue can support, and far less a branch of revenue, which will then be nearly annihilated.

*Advent.* Poh, poh, these are idle apprehensions. How is smuggling prevented at present?

*Mod.* Do you suppose that there is no smuggling at present? Do you not know that tea, white and painted calicoes, muslins, shawls, spices, and many other Oriental articles, can be put up in small parcels, and landed from open boats on unfrequented parts of the coast with the greatest facility by people well acquainted with the place and the nearest inhabitants? Do you not know that, before the year 1784, when Parliament wisely reduced the duty on tea from 119 per cent. to  $12\frac{1}{2}$ , such a smuggling trade as I have now described was carried on to so great an extent, that two thirds of the tea consumed in the British dominions were either smuggled, or counterfeited by making up the leaves of sloes, ash, &c. so as to resemble tea? Along with tea, which was their main article, the smugglers imported prodigious quantities of brandy, gin, wine, lace, and other articles; and in their return voyages they carried off great quantities of wool, notwithstanding the



bulkiness of it, and the very rigorous laws against the exportation of that important material of the most favoured manufacture of England. In short, there is but one way to prevent smuggling; and that is to afford no temptation to it. And thus it appears, that the woollen manufacturers have another strong interest in the preservation of the India trade in its present channel, in addition to the great benefit they derive from furnishing their goods to the Company. The cotton manufacturers and calico printers, a class of people much too valuable and important to be neglected, are at present sufficiently distressed by the long continuance of the war, and nothing but the hope of peace preserves them from sinking into absolute despair. Think what must be the extreme horror of their situation when India goods, similar to their own fabrics, are poured in upon every part of the coast in quantities which the demand cannot possibly take off, at whatever prices they may be offered, and which will therefore be sold, whether smuggled or fairly entered, at prices equally ruinous to the manufacturers, whose fabrics will not find sale at any price, and to the unfortunate importers.

I have hitherto considered the consequences of the demanded extension of the trade, as it will affect the merchants, the manufacturers, and the landed interest. Let us now see how it will affect the people at large, all of whom, from the peer to the beggar, must, according to their circumstances,



feel the pressure of taxes to be imposed for making up the deficiency of above five millions of revenue, as I have already stated it. In the year 1799, Mr. Pitt estimated the annual income of the inhabitants of Great Britain at one hundred and twenty five millions : and it will require a new tax of one shilling in the pound of each person's income to make good a deficiency of five millions and the expense of collecting. Mr. Pitt expected to raise above ten millions by his income tax, but it fell short of six. If the error lay in estimating the national income too high, the new tax, we are now contemplating, will need to be at least eighteen pence in the pound : and by whatever means of direct or indirect taxation the sum may be raised, all persons whatever must contribute to the payment of it.

*Shopkeeper.* I know the possessors of the monopoly always hold out such frightful prospects to deter people from seeking to engage in the India trade, by which they themselves, “ from the Director down “ to the door-keeper of the palace in Leadenhall- “ street, are amassing independent or princely “ fortunes.” But I am not to be terrified by bugbears. I am determined to send an adventure of well assorted goods to India as soon as possible after the trade is opened. I mean to send a stock of wine, rum, cyder, and porter ; a parcel of butter and cheese ; a good assortment of broad cloths and silk. My friend Dickins is to lay in blankets



and negro clothing for me. My neighbour Whalebone is to make me up an assortment of lady's stays. Neighbour Steel has offered me a capital parcel of skates at very low prices : and Sable, the undertaker, has promised me a good assortment of coffin furniture at a long credit.\*

*Advent.* Some of my friends in Cumberland have agreed with some gentlemen in Liverpool and myself to be jointly concerned in a shipment of refined sugar, coffee, and coals, for which we expect to have good returns " in grain, raw cotton, " hides, hemp, and many other articles."

*Mod.* Do you really think that such a cargo will sell in India, or that the returns you propose can pay for the freight, unless, indeed, you can sail a ship of eight hundred tons with seven men ?

*Advent.* To be sure I do. I learn from an author of the highest reputation, that " all the extraordinary demand, which competition could " occasion, must be but as a drop of water in the " immense ocean of Indian commerce."

*Mod.* Ay, that is the opinion of Dr. Smith. He was a great political economist, but not infallible : and he was most wonderfully deficient in the knowledge of the East-India trade, which, he supposed, was to be conducted like the trade with

\* See *Mawe's Times in Brazil* for the positive fact of such merchandize being actually sent to that country, which is in the same climate with India.



America and the West-Indies; whereas no two things can be more unlike.

*Shopkeeper.* It is easy to see, that you are very partial to the Company; and therefore you want to make us believe, contrary to reason and experience, that a great extension of the trade will be the ruin of it.

*Mod.* I wish you to be guided by reason and experience. If you accuse me of partiality, you must also accuse true history of partiality. Read the history of the commerce of Europe with India; and you will find that the open trade ruined a great number of merchants in France: and, if I mistake not, the distress and ruin of families in this country, when the Government connived at the practices of the interlopers, was much more extensive than in France.

In consequence of the piratical exploits of Courten's fleet in the gulf of Canton, the English were formally declared the enemies of the Chinese Empire; and they have ever since been treated with peculiar severity and jealousy by the Chinese Government, till Lord Macartney's embassy, sent out at a prodigious expense, procured some trifling relaxation. The transactions of Courten and those concerned with him damaged the Company to the amount of £100,000. The partners stated their own loss at £150,000. The losses of their numerous creditors and of those dependent upon them cannot be ascertained, or even estimated. But



there can be no doubt that many are now pining in poverty, whose ancestors might have transmitted handsome fortunes to them, if they had not been ruined by the misconduct of Courten and those engaged with him. It is a miserable state of things, where all are losers, and none are gainers. Cromwell, during his protectorate, permitted the Company's privilege to be violated, till he saw the fatal effects of the scramble for the trade in India and at home; and then he confirmed their privilege by a new charter. In the reign of King William the encroachments of the private traders upon the Company corrupted the whole nation, and produced the usual distress to the Company and to the traders, who at last acknowledged the impossibility of carrying on the trade, except in a corporate association, and accordingly solicited and obtained an Act of Parliament authorizing them to trade to India, and also permitting the private traders, then upon their voyages, to return to London. For some years the contending interests of the two Companies and the separate traders were attended with the usual consequences of public disorder and private ruin, till the union of the two Companies, the only possible remedy for the evil, put an end to animosity, and produced harmony, stability and regularity, which have enabled the United Company, notwithstanding frequent wars and heavy losses, to conduct their great concerns with the dignity, punctual honour,



and liberality, which have eminently distinguished them from all the other East-India Companies of Europe. Let the present generation take warning from the instructive events of the times which are past, and not wantonly demolish a great edifice, the work of ages, the wonder and the envy of the world, in order to build a number of petty cottages with the ruins of it.

*Silv.* I do not deny that free trade might be hurtful to those who engaged in it long ago, when our merchants had very small capitals, and our navigators had little knowledge of the Indian seas. But now the case is very different indeed: our capitals are sufficient for any trade, however great; and our navigators are capable of conducting our ships to every part of the world. The war has now shut us out from almost all the ports of Europe, and the Company's monopoly shuts us out from three fifths of the globe. But we will no longer tamely submit to so unjust an exclusion—"The commercial monopoly of the East-India Company must be abolished."

*Mod.* You have now very justly ascribed the mercantile distress of the country to the war.—Therefore the wisest course for the merchants, and indeed, for the whole body of the people, (for all are suffering, except those who gain by war) would be to unite in a strong requisition for a speedy termination of the war, which has now reduced all



those, who were in easy circumstances, to distress, and a very great number of those who gained their bread by the fair earnings of honest industry, to beggary and parochial maintenance, degrading to the feelings of men, and intolerably oppressive to those who, by extraordinary exertions and honourable pride, preserve themselves from the humiliation of applying for charity, and are consequently compelled to deny themselves many of the necessities of life, in order to supply them to others, who have less dignity of mind, but perhaps as much means of self-dependence as themselves. If peace were restored, there would be ample scope for all the capital and enterprize of the country to be employed in a variety of channels without any one interfering with another.

*Silv.* No, Gentlemen, we will never tarnish the honour of our country so far as to petition for an ignominious peace, though our burthens were a thousand times heavier than they are.

*Mod.* The longer you continue the war, the worse will be your condition, though it is absolutely impossible that it can be a thousand times worse than it is now, when our money is annihilated, the fictitious currency, substituted for it, depreciated to one quarter of its nominal value in the purchase of the necessities of life, and the manufactures and commerce of the country, those vital springs of its prosperity, reduced almost to the last gasp of ex-



istence. As to an ignominious peace, I do not believe there is any occasion to mention such a thing. The French, being less dependent upon foreign trade, and therefore not so much distressed by the war as we are, feel the pressure severely enough to induce them to insist upon peace, if we would magnanimously offer fair terms : and their Emperor, if he should be disposed to refuse such terms, which is not at all probable, would lose his popularity, and perhaps his crown, not yet fixed upon his head by long prescription. But we cannot expect the offer to come from him after his former overtures have been rejected, and sometimes without even coming to an explanation. “Blessed are the peace-makers.”

*Count. Gent.* Sir, I have listened with great attention to what you have said, and I acknowledge myself much obliged to you for the information you have given me, which has every appearance of being correct and authentic. I am ashamed to say that I have scarcely ever thought of commercial subjects, with which, as you truly observed, I did not suppose myself any way connected. I shall now think it my duty, as a member of the community, and a proprietor of some portion of the soil, to obtain some knowledge of the trade of the kingdom, of which, I see the East-India trade is a very principal branch. But how shall I get access to true information respecting the facts, upon which my judgment ought to be founded ?



*Mod.* I would not wish you to hear only one side, but, from the attention I have paid to the subject, I am warranted to say, that the publications against the Company contain very few facts, and those mostly perverted. Statements of facts and accounts, unquestionably authentic, may be found in the *Reports of the Committees of the Lords and Commons upon India Affairs*. But as these, though printed, are not sold, and not generally attainable, you may read the preliminary essays in *Mickle's Translation of Camoens's Lusiad*—*Macpherson's History of European Commerce with India*—*Jackson's Speech in the Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock* in May last,—and *Considerations on the Danger and Impolicy of laying open the Trade of India and China*. The three last contain statements and accounts extracted from official documents, the accuracy of which may be safely depended upon.

*Count. Gent.* When I have made myself better acquainted with the subject by the perusal of the works you have been so kind as to recommend to me, and also some of those written against the East-India Company, which I shall do as soon as possible, if I am convinced of the justness of your opinion, as I am inclined to think I shall, I will talk with all my neighbours upon the subject; and endeavour to get them to join with me in recommending it to our two members to resist the pro-



jected innovation with all their power and interest.

*Cotton Manufacturer.* And I will make every exertion I am capable of to open the eyes of my brethren in every branch of the cotton trade to the danger which threatens them, and advise them to petition Parliament not to sanction the overwhelming glut, and the fatal reduction of prices, which must infallibly be the consequence of unbounded and uncontrouled smuggling of India cottons upon every part of the coast of Great Britain and Ireland and the innumerable remote islands. All the lincndrapers in the kingdom ought also to present similar petitions.

*Mod. Gentlemen,* in what I have now offered to your attention, I have strictly kept to indisputable facts, as you may easily satisfy yourselves, if you will take the trouble to acquire the necessary information. And now, really, you must give me leave to say, that I cannot help thinking that Bonaparte has employed some agents to stir up this wide-spread spirit of clamouring for an uncontrouled abandonment of the India trade to wild and inexperienced adventure, or rather to certain destruction. He has professed that his desire is to have trade, ships, and colonies: and as trade, when driven from one country by injudicious treatment, necessarily removes to another, so if the only unimpaired trade of this country shall be frittered



down to shreds, and the noble fleet of ships in the Company's service shall be worn out or sold, there is no country so likely as France, assisted by the East-India experience of her Dutch subjects, to reap the advantage of our misconduct. Bonaparte, who is a consummate politician, as well as a great general, can easily foresee the sure consequence of the destruction of our India trade, the ruin of our cotton manufacturers, the general decline of our commercial prosperity (for the various branches of the national commerce mutually support one another) and the consequent failure of the public revenue : and, as long as he is our enemy, he has an interest in promoting such a consummation ; and therefore he is, I think, very probably the director and first spring of the machinations for bringing on this tremendous threatened ruin, which so many people of this country, are thoughtlessly, maliciously, or traitorously, labouring to bring upon us.

Having advised you to profit by the examples of former times, and to let your judgment be founded upon solid facts rather than frothy declamation, I shall conclude by recommending to your attention the advice of Sir Francis Bacon, who, in his Essay on Innovation, says, “ It is not good to try *experiments* in States, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility be evident ; and it is well to beware that it be reformation that draweth on the



“ change, and not the desire of change that pre-  
 “ tendeth the reformation; and lastly, that the  
 “ novelty, though it be not rejected, yet be held  
 “ for suspect, and as the Scripture sayeth, ‘That  
 “ ‘ we make a stand upon the ancient way, and  
 “ ‘ then look about us, and discover what is the  
 “ ‘ straight and right way, and so walk in it.’ ”

**THE END.**



THIRD EDITION.

---

*Free Trade with India.*

---

**AN ENQUIRY**

INTO

THE TRUE STATE

OF

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE

BETWEEN

HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS,

THE HONORABLE

***THE EAST INDIA COMPANY,***

AND

THE PUBLIC AT LARGE,

ON

*THE JUSTICE AND POLICY*

OF

A FREE TRADE TO INDIA.

---

*By COMMON SENSE.*

---

LONDON :

SOLD BY MESSRS. SHEPWOOD, NELLY & JONES, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1813.

[*Price One Shilling.*]







# PREFACE

TO THE

## SECOND EDITION

---

THE first edition of the following view of the question of a *Free Trade* to India having been sold off in the space of two days, is a proof of the interest the public take in the question of a Free Trade; my aim has been to clear the subject of all extraneous matter, and present it in a plain and perspicuous manner to my readers, I have neither addressed myself to their prejudices nor their passions, but have endeavoured by a simple chain of reasoning to come at the truth, which is my single object, for being totally unconnected with Government, the East India Company, or mercantile concerns, I can have no motive for disguising it. Soon after the publication of the first edition on the 23d instant, I received the following letter, which will perhaps be more acceptable than any thing further from me by way of preface.

---

*Tavistock Place, Jan. 25, 1813.*

DEAR SIR,

I have read your *Common Sense*, which is good sense, and so intelligible that he who runs may read, and he who reads can scarcely fail to understand.

I wish you had treated the subject of monopolies more copiously, and informed your readers that in the early ages of commerce monopolies were so extended, and the principle so abused, that they could not fail to become obnoxious to all, and tradition has made the name hateful ever since.



The kings of France, particularly Louis XIV. to raise money sold *maitrices*, as they were called, or a sort of privilege for exercising certain trades, and he at the same time limited the number, this practice, together with the former monopolies not abolished, created a general wish for *Freedom of Trade* in France.\* The sect of economists were composed of republican philosophers, who proclaimed the grand advantages to be derived from the entire Freedom of Trade, nor was it then foreseen that under that pretext they were seeking *Liberty and Equality*, which but a few years after deluged France with the blood of her best sons, and had nearly ruined the world.

You mention Adam Smith, he was the disciple and admirer of the economists; in a word he was what we denominate a democrat. As to entire Freedom of Trade, who that ever thought on the subject could dream of it. The corn laws, all bounties and drawbacks, the regulation even of weights and measures, the assay of silver and gold, the interest of money, &c. &c. &c. are directly in opposition to it, and prove the economists were wrong. When the French revolution broke out, excepting in weights and measures, every restraint was done away, but instead of things improving thereby they grew visibly worse. A short history of monopolies would be a very useful work, as it would clear up many mistakes concerning them.

If Adam Smith were now alive he would probably have changed many of his opinions, for he was a good, and honest, as well as an able man, but he was deceived, not being initiated in the ulterior mysteries of M. Turgot and his associates.

I am your's, &c.

\* My friend does not seem to be aware that Buonaparte has generalized the principle; nearly all the tradesmen in Paris being compelled to purchase those *maitrices*. The principle is in some degree known and acted upon in England, as in the case of bankers, wine-merchants, &c. &c. &c. and the limited principle in the case of licences of public houses, &c.



# FREE TRADE WITH INDIA,

&c. &c.

4

---

**T**HE questions that have arisen of late respecting the East India Company, or rather *the Commerce with India*, for that is the stake and nothing less, are undoubtedly of great and serious importance. To enter into all the ramifications of the subject would require volumes, the mere bulk of which would startle most readers, and prevent their going into the question, and induce them to take up with the opinions of one, who appearing to have bestowed labour and attention on the subject, shapes his results in the manner best suited to his purpose. This mode of proceeding almost as old as the creation, and which will continue as long as any man pays a deference to the judgment of another, is the grand engine of designing men to bias the minds of the million who "hate the



"labour of a serious thought," a specious appellation is enough for the million to form a decision upon. I could instance many of these senseless war-whoops from "*Liberty and Equality*" to "*a Free Trade*,"\* were it necessary, or at all to the point.

This mode, however, is only objectionable in the hands of sinister persons, for where the question at issue like the present, is very intricate, some such mode must be had recourse to, in order to simplify the question; I have therefore always considered that to take a popular view of a subject, some great leading points must be seized, and from these our judgment should be formed. This, if not the most accurate, is at least the best mode, where what is called public feeling is to be consulted.

To study the interests of Great Britain and of British merchants with regard to the trade with India; to combine those with the territorial possessions and the interests of the country at large; to investigate also not only what would be the immediate consequences of a sudden change, but

\* It would be a curious piece of history to enumerate the instances in which such watch-words have been used, by whom, for what purposes, and what were the results arising therefrom in each case.\*



what might be the ultimate effects, are all necessary, to form that sort of judgment proper for the basis of action. That those immediately concerned with the affairs of India have examined the subject with great care and to good purpose, is abundantly evident from the correspondence, speeches, and pamphlets, already before the public; fraught as they are with many important facts, much acute observation, and for the most part dictated by a desire to come, if possible, to the best conclusion, all this is evident, yet it strikes me that something useful remains behind.

Were the question simply between *Government* and *the Company*, I should not descant upon it; aware as I am that it has been canvassed by the parties on every ground and in every shape; but there is a *third* party who has interfered. The *merchants at large* all over the kingdom, the *shippers at the out-ports*, and the manufacturers in the interior, all urged on by what is termed the *public voice*, crying out *A Free Trade* and *No Monopoly*.

The trading towns, cities, and manufacturers do not pretend to have considered the subject minutely; therefore, for aught they know to the contrary, they are acting honestly and right; I will therefore address them with that open frank-



ness which such conduct deserves, and which may lead to a conclusion very different from what was aimed at in the last Session of Parliament.

For the sake of perspicuity I shall consider the subject under different heads.

I. All monopolies are not wrong or injurious, as in some cases, we are the best and cheapest served by a monopoly; this proved, it follows that the India Company being possessed of a monopoly, does not of itself argue that it should be withdrawn.

II. That the trade with India is far from being carried on, on the principle of monopoly.

III. That any great change must be attended with great danger, consequently we must not follow theory too readily, but, pay great respect to practice and experience.

IV. That the public at large have no reason to complain of the India Company, as the articles brought before



have not increased in price in proportion either to ruins or sugars from the West Indies, where there is no monopoly.

V. That the merchants of Liverpool, Hull, &c. and the manufacturers in their endeavours to share the trade with London, are seeking what would be injurious to them.

VI. That some errors were fallen into in the present Charter, which may be advantageously corrected in the next, and a few slight amendments may be attempted with safety, but no great change or innovation.



I. *All monopolies are not wrong or injurious, as in some cases, we are the best and cheapest served by a monopoly, this once proved, it follows that the India Company being possessed of a monopoly, does not of itself argue that it should be withdrawn.*

The manner in which the public can be the best and cheapest supplied with an article, is in itself



the *best*, whether it be by a monopoly or not. This is conceded even by Adam Smith, that great enemy to monopolies; and he adduces for proof the *Post Office*, which is one of the strictest and most complete monopolies in existence, yet the business is done remarkably cheap and well, and with a degree of security not otherwise attainable. It is infinitely more correct than the carriage of small parcels, which is by open competition, and all circumstances considered much cheaper.

The Bank of England is partly a monopoly, but by no means a complete one, and it is better regulated and does business better than private banks that issue notes, and which are so far its rivals.

Most of the concerns which have been brought to maturity in this country have first flourished as *monopolies* under the name of patents, and indeed there are many reasons for highly praising those temporary monopolies.\*

---

\* Lloyd's Coffee-House is in fact a monopoly, self created, and of a new species, a sort of *republican company*, resembling in some things, what are termed regulated companies, in contradiction to the joint stock companies, with this difference however, that the present members may exclude whom they please which is a monopoly principle.



The insurance companies are not exactly monopolies, neither are they free traders in the true acceptation of the term, jointly or separately taking insurances without legislative interference; and, without such companies, it would be impracticable to carry on insurance so well as it is done.

Navigations and water-works companies are monopolies in principle, but they are necessary and advantageous.

From all these examples it follows, that *monopoly* is not bad merely as *monopoly*, and that its being *injurious* depends on particular circumstances, and therefore the India Company being a company of monopolists, would not be a sufficient reason for its abolition, even were it proved to be so, but this has not yet been done.

## II. *That the Trade with India is far from being carried on, upon the principle of monopoly.*

From the first discovery of India, and the most ancient and authentic records in existence, we learn that the trade to the East, which produces whatever is most brilliant to the eye, most delicious to the taste, or agreeable to the smell, has been the



envy of nations. To share in them, Solomon built Tadmor in the desert, (the Hebrew name, in Greek, Palmyra); for this, Alexander the Great destroyed Tyre, built Alexandria, and invaded India; for this trade Venice, Genoa, and Constantinople contended above eight hundred years, when the discovery of a passage by the Cape of Good Hope, wrested that commerce from the ancient competitors, and the Dutch and Portuguese became the successors of those inland merchants, who partly by caravans and partly by navigation, had supplied Europe with the silks, the pearls, the perfumes, and the precious stones of Asia from the earliest ages.

At so great a distance every power that traded found it necessary to have an establishment. The Inhabitants have not laws sufficient to protect the merchant, such as are necessary to a flourishing state of commerce; hence arose settlements and conquests, of the moral justice of which, I have nothing to say in this place; but being established, in order to maintain them, it was necessary to have revenues, and to continue certain privileges to the first traders, in order that they might act as a body, and supply from the general stock what was for the general advantage.

The great body of the public are perhaps not aware that so far from ever intending to make a



monopoly of the trade to India, there were in fact *two* companies at one time, and that experience proved it was necessary to unite them into one, since which period, the public, as well as the servants of the company have always been permitted to participate on certain conditions.\*

The above is a very brief, but true history of the trade to India ; now we will consider its present state as a *supposed monopoly*. As to the trade to China in tea, and to certain other articles, and also to ships there is monopoly, but if the trade to China were open to all the irregularities of common trading vessels, we should be excluded from it entirely in six months. The utmost circumspection and delicacy being necessary in trading with that country, besides which, the commerce demands such a large extent of capital and produces so little profit, that it would not answer the purpose of individual merchants.

\* The public does not, perhaps, know also, that Oliver Cromwell in levelling times, abolished the charter, but that like the *House of Peers*, which was also abolished, it was obliged to be restored. The present attempt, is in fact, a small attack of liberty and equality, that epidemical disease that raged in England at the time of the great rebellion, and in France at the beginning of the revolution. Destruction or a strait waistcoat must be the consequence of such a disease.



It is however sufficient for this article to say, that the company carry out and bring home a great variety of articles, at a fixed, and indeed at a very low rate of freight, such as no individual would do, or ever attempted to do. That if any manufacturer or merchant can find out an article that will sell in India, the company so far from preventing his doing so, afford him facilities not otherwise attainable. No mistake can in fact be greater than to say, with the uninformed and misled public, that the East India Company is a monopoly, and injures trade by preventing our merchants and manufacturers from having a scope for their capital and industry. Thus then the clamour raised last year, in favour of what is called a free trade, is entirely founded in error, but even were it not so, we may fairly enquire.

III. *Whether any great Change would not be attended with great Danger? If so we must not follow theory too readily, but pay great respect to practice and experience.*

The trade to India, in its present state, produces, a great influx of wealth to the country, though but a very moderate average profit to the Proprietors as a trading company. We must, therefore, risk



this, if we consider that the French had an East India Company in 1789, and that by way of being liberal and free, they did what an inconsiderate public want us to do. They abolished the company, and let every one do as he pleased, when the trade vanished like a dream. L'Orient, the seat of French East India trade, fell, and no one rose in its place, neither towns nor individuals, and the trade with India became extinct in France. I will admit that such would not be precisely the case here, still we ought to keep such an example in our minds to warn us against the dangers of innovation; besides it is sufficient that our *present state* is good, for that is a sufficient reason to prevent our risking it by too sudden a change. If we follow experience slowly, we may perhaps make things better, and perhaps not; but at all events the error will be small and may be repaired, we can come back to the point we left. Whereas if we throw open the trade, or extend it even to a limited number of out-ports, we may find it impossible to retrieve the error, supposing it should turn out to be one. Softly and sure is a maxim which could never be better applied than in the present instance; and if a thousand sheets were to be written upon the expediency of the measure, after what has happened in France, it is quite evident that to the same conclusion we must come.



IV. *That the public at large have no reason to complain of the India Company, as the articles brought by it have not increased in price in proportion to either Rums or Sugars from the West Indies, where there is no monopoly.* . . .

A single instance must convince the most sceptical. The East India Company carry British manufactures out to India at about 40s. ~~per~~ ton—a distance of seven thousand miles,—a rate cheaper than the carriage for five hundred miles in any other direction; therefore our manufacturers have a good chance of selling their goods, owing to their not being greatly enhanced by freight, and the servants of the Company are allowed to traffic, so that every article adapted for the India market can find its way there without difficulty, though the Company itself may not enter into such details.

Those who wish to send goods to India are therefore highly indebted to the Company; and as to the imports I will ask the public only one simple question; Have East India commodities risen in price, notwithstanding the heavy duties and increased expences of ship-building, and every article relating thereto, so much as West India produce?



It is not necessary to dwell on this point ; it is an evident fact that the East India goods are far cheaper than they would be if brought over by individual merchants, and the supply is more regular. If sales are slow the Company keeps its goods at its own loss, with admirable good nature, or at least, with admirable *sang froid*, and it never creates an artificial scarcity to enhance the price. The sales are by fair competition and without favour ; what would the public wish or desire more ? We come now to the next point.

V. *That the merchants of Liverpool, Hull, &c. and the manufacturers, in their endeavour to share the trade with London, are asking what would be injurious to themselves.*

Having already shewn the danger of any great change, let us consider the probability of advantage. When goods are shipped for such a remote market, it is essentially necessary, previously to ascertain, that they are wanted. Now when the exports are confined to one company, from its accurate knowledge of trade, it can proportion the quantities of the articles to the general demand for each ; but if there are 500 merchants, entirely ignorant of what each other are doing ; or what is worse, deceiving each other, in order to insure a better market for their own shipment, they will



necessarily send too much of some articles and not enough of others; hence many will be ruined, for they cannot carry their cargoes from port to port as in Europe or America: if the market is overstocked at the port they are bound to, there is no alternative, but sacrificing the cargo for what it will fetch, or leaving it on hand to await the chance of a future sale. On the return of the vessel, here the merchant awakes from his golden dream, and finds himself on the verge of bankruptcy, for the utmost limit of credit has expired — He is ruined!

As to our manufactures it is not probable that more would be consumed than at present, for as we have already observed, the officers in the Company's service carry out goods of all descriptions, and enter into competition with each other, and that whatever can be sold they can and do take out\*; however if this reasoning be not satisfactory, there is a very easy way of extending that species of traffic without any danger.

\* Besides, the Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, French, and English settlers in the interior have explored the country, and tried what extension they could give to the trade, so that the British merchants, who proceed on the idea that they will make discoveries, and form new connections, labour under a total mistake.



At present none of our manufacturers lose by bad debts with India; were the trade laid open, it would undoubtedly be worse than at Buenos Ayres, when one call from Sir Home Popham took out from three to four millions of British capital, (as a boatswain whistles his crew on deck,) to the great loss and disappointment of some, and the absolute ruin of many more. Now should the consumption of our goods not be increased; opening the trade would manifestly injure all embarking in it; for the freight and insurance could not be lower, but would be considerably higher than at present.

As to a few individual towns asserting a claim to participate in the commerce of India, it is a very singular and novel kind of claim: if I apprehend aright, the nature of things attaches particular advantages to particular places; I mean privileges which are *naturally* local.

The court, for example, is held at London, which brings a great influx of wealth to the metropolis. On this principle Edinburgh might put in a claim to have the court some part of the year, and such claim might be followed up by similar ones from the *keel-men* of Newcastle, the lock-smiths of Walsal, and the tinmen of Cornwall.



The thing is really too ridiculous to think seriously upon. Some advantages are not only legal, but indivisible, and there is no injustice arising therefrom, though with a little sophistry in certain cases it may be made to appear injustice when it is really not so, which is the case in the present instance, for it is in the revenue that the nation is a gainer by the East India Company, and that must suffer considerably in the collection; besides, all the docks, warehouses, and other establishments made here, on the faith of the trade remaining as it is, must come into the question.

If trade must be dispersed equally over a country, like spreading manure on a field, it would be different; but there is an absurdity in the very idea of spreading it equally, and justice has absolutely nothing to do with the question; it is entirely a matter of policy and expediency.

VI. *That some errors were fallen into in the present charter, which may be advantageously corrected in the next; and a few slight amendments may be attempted with safety, but no great change or innovation.*

Making the dividends fixed, and independent of loss or gain, is wrong and absurd. No



effort can increase the dividend, no extravagance or negligence can lessen it, and it cannot be concealed, that from such a state of things it necessarily arises that patronage is the only bonus on India stock. There is some connection either with ship-builders, sail-makers, or the furnishers of stores, officers, secretaries, clerks, or appointments abroad.

It is true the connection is circuitous, and the patronage difficult to trace, but the fact resolves itself to this, that however it may be divided amongst them, the whole of the patronage of places and profits, at home and abroad, civil and military, is vested in the Directors and Proprietors, and that patronage is of an amazing amount and extent.

In this enquiry I have endeavoured at impartiality, I write not to serve the East India Company, but the country itself—Ministers want the East India patronage, it was for this, Charles Fox made his celebrated struggle; it is this golden prize that makes the present ministers hazard every thing to obtain; it is not the flimsy net-work mask of freedom of



trade, the very worst pretext they could have found, *IT IS THE PATRONAGE OF INDIA* they fight for, and to obtain which, would break down every barrier, destroy every establishment, and trample on every right.—*Let those then who already think the influence of the Crown too great beware how they throw into the scale THE PATRONAGE OF INDIA.* Freedom of trade is like the Trojan horse, from it will issue what will destroy the freedom of the country.—There are many other errors in the arrangements of the Company, but they are minor ones and not worth detailing here. The grand question to be decided is, the opening of the trade, which I have already treated.

In conclusion then, MONOPOLY IS NOT ALWAYS INDIGNOUS.—THE EAST INDIA COMPANY DOES NOT POSSESS A MONOPOLY.—GREAT CHANGES WILL BE ATTENDED WITH GREAT DANGER. *The public has no right to complain, nor the Company to object, if brought to them, they will do no good.* There would be no loss and no advantage in sharing the



trade with the out-ports; and, lastly, that the faults in the present system are entirely of a different nature, and may be easily and safely amended;

FINIS.







~~CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION~~

~~CONSIDERATIONS~~

~~COLONIAL POLICY~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION~~







**CONSIDERATIONS**  
**ON**  
**COLONIAL POLICY,**  
**WITH RELATION TO**  
**THE RENEWAL**  
**OF THE**  
**EAST INDIA COMPANY'S**  
**Charter.**

---

---

**BY AN IMPARTIAL OBSERVER.**

---

---

**London :**

**PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD,**  
**BOOKSELLER AND PUBLISHER, 190, OPPOSITE ALBANY,**  
**PICCADILLY.**

---

**1813.**



---

Printed by J. Brettel,  
Raper Street, Haymarket, London.



---

CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
RENEWAL OF THE  
EAST INDIA COMPANY'S  
Charter.

---

**T**HAT every nation, in the establishment of distant possessions, has in contemplation its own progressive welfare and ultimate aggrandizement, will be universally admitted. It may happen, indeed, that the primary intercourse between them has originated in views purely commercial: either the importation of some raw material calculated to give employment to the population of the mother-country; or the increased export of her existing manufactures; or her natural produce. Nevertheless, the result uniformly produces an



augmentation of her political strength and commercial importance ; provided the connexion remains unimpaired, and an amicable intercourse continues to be carried on. Were it otherwise, the colonial system would only cause embarrassment, and occasion a display of extended territory and multiplied population, without any increase of national energy. Unproductive territorial possessions, and unemployed manufacturers, are dead weights upon society, and must eventually sink the most powerful communities.

The national superiority of states, considered physically, is to be estimated by the number of their inhabitants, and their ability to support an increasing population. The means of employment must consequently be sought for, and, if possible, obtained ; for on this the subsistence of the main body of the people must depend. Now this is chiefly to be found in the extension of the manufacturing principle, which will furnish employment for thousands of those whose labours are not required by the agricultural interest. It is this consideration which renders foreign



possessions so extremely valuable, nay even necessary, to the well-being of states yielding an increase of population. In proportion, therefore, to the extent of their colonies, and in so far as they are made subservient to the population at home, have nations acquired additional strength and consequence;\* these, however, have not continued beyond the period of taking away from those colonies necessary restraining regulations, and abolishing the sovereign controul of the mother-country.

Colonies may be thus classed:—those which are founded by means of emigration from the mother-country; such as have been planted in consequence of the cession of the natives; colonies which are the fruits of conquest; or, lastly, those which owe their origin to varied combinations of these several circumstances. It is of great impor-

\* It is obvious that the author supposes a due proportion to be observed between the population at home and the colonies planted abroad. The case of Spain, where the mother-country has been exhausted and reduced to a state of imbecility by improvident and profuse colonization, affords a solecism in politics; and as the Spanish colonies draw no supplies from the mother-country, they may be deemed in every thing, but name, independent upon her.



tance to bear these distinctions in mind ; for they must ever be attended to in the granting of privileges, the prescribing of restrictions, and the framing of laws adapted to the peculiar cast, character, and circumstances of each. Dissimilar as they are in their very nature, one unvaried form of government cannot, with propriety, be applied to them all. Those indulgences and encouragements which are necessary to some of them may prove prejudicial to others : nor have they an equal claim on the parent state. Those persons who cannot mark those statistical differences which must necessarily determine their several constitutions, and the quantum of their immunities, have yet much to learn concerning the true principles of colonial legislation.

The progress of colonies in all the arts of civil society, as well as in gradual advances towards independence, is natural, and perhaps unavoidable ; particularly in those instances where the inhabitants retain their original language, and live under the same laws, observe the same customs, and have been trained up in a participation of



the same ideas of civil liberty which prevail in the mother-country. Colonies have their state of infancy and pupillage ; after a while, they attain maturity, imbibe notions of independence, and become uneasy under those restraints which guarded their infantile state. In this we may distinguish a marked similarity between the natural and the political world. After a certain period, those establishments begin to make attempts at procuring independence ; and fatal experience has proved, from what has already taken place in the western hemisphere, that these attempts are at last crowned with success. From the very commencement of jealousies and animosities, the parent state derives a diminishing benefit from her settlements, in exact proportion as they less require her aid, and give less employment to her manufacturers in furnishing the articles which the colonists consume.

Millions may have been expended, and heavy taxes willingly paid, by the mother-country in support of her colonies struggling for existence : but notwithstanding all this, and even the impartition of patronage, and



the necessary aids afforded to the commercial credit of the colonists in cases of emergency ; the whole has too often ended rather in promoting than impeding their ultimate independence, and has rendered nugatory all the measures hitherto prescribed by the most refined policy to render them, for as long a period as possible, instrumental to the welfare, and subsidiary to the prosperity, of the parent state.

These considerations, suggested by bitter experience, have been hitherto very little attended to in managing distant possessions. The general benefit of the colonies has been consulted as the primary, and almost the sole object ; but at last, when public expenditure and private exertion, lavishly combined, have rendered them independent, we have only to lament our unhappy mistakes.

Let any thinking man but advert to the sums laid out upon our American settlements, looking simply at the documents of yearly expenditure preserved in the tables recorded in the Annual Register : let him reflect upon the wars in which we engaged for the sake of our colonies, particularly



when Lord Chatham undertook to conquer America in Germany ; let him look at the blood and treasure spent in expelling the French from Canada, which in 1759 was thought a most fortunate (as it surely was a glorious) achievement, though subsequent events have proved the fallacy of such an idea,—and he must necessarily see, if he do not wilfully shut his eyes, that all this liberality, and martial prowess, did but hasten the catastrophe of July 4, 1776, when the Thirteen Colonies declared themselves independent.

It may be deemed too late, when the Rubicon is passed, to deprecate impolicy of this sort, or to indulge in unavailing complaints. It will however serve to prevent a repetition of such distressful circumstances in after times, to point out this most important fact, *that by not adhering firmly to wholesome regulations, and proper restrictions, there can be but a small chance of prolonging that period during which colonies are of advantage to the mother-country.* Take away the restraints of sound policy, and a premature separation must necessarily be produced, extremely detrimental



to the latter, and leaving the former in a state hardly equal to the protection of their growing commerce, unable to repel aggression, and a prey to all the evils which invariably vex and harass a weak government. The experience of past ages will no doubt furnish many examples of a like description; and in consequence of our treading in the footsteps of those who before us have deviated from the path of true policy, a similar result must necessarily follow: and it will be found, that in the instance of colonies formed by emigration from the parent state, confidence has been reposed in them, concessions have been liberally made, and encouragements of every kind have been held out to them; till the colonists have taken advantage of the bounteous disposition of their fellow-subjects at home; and have ultimately used the strength which they have attained, to break asunder those links of grateful amity, which should have held them attached to the land of their fathers as firmly as chains of adamant. Authentic history proves, that from the era of the Grecian colonies planted in Asia Minor,



to, the memorable event of the American revolution, the removal of restrictions has occasioned a lengthened series of expense, bloodshed, and vexation, till a final separation has taken place between a mother, foolishly fond, and her ungrateful offspring.

Whatever sentiments may be entertained concerning the equity or the policy of granting indulgences to colonies of this class; are we to assume it as a general maxim, that to colonized territories obtained by cession, similar privileges and benevolences are to be granted? Or at least, when conquest has added provinces or islands to the ancient dominion of existing states, ought not the entire frame of the government and the scale of commerce, devised for these new acquisitions, (unless otherwise settled by the terms of their surrender), to depend wholly upon the cultivation of those interests which may best promote the welfare and prosperity of the country by whose sword they have been gained, and to whose empire they are become appendages?

Conquests achieved in distant parts of the globe are but of questionable importance,



and productive of small benefit to any country, compared with those colonies which owe their origin to emigration. The scale of refinement and civilisation may be as high in the reduced provinces, as in the victorious state. They may have advanced as far in the perfection of mechanical arts, as the nation which has subdued them ; they may equal the more powerful country in the richness of their natural productions ; they may even excel it in the variety, the delicacy, or the utility of their manufactures. It will therefore derive little or no advantage from the export trade with the acquired territories, and they may even rival their new mistress in supplying other nations with the necessities or the elegancies of life ; a competition which must be fraught with many dangers to the sovereign state, whose well-being it were absurd to place in any circumstances of hazard. This were only to conquer political ruin, and prematurely to accelerate statistical decay. That country must be ignorant of every principle which tends to cherish the prosperity, or secure the wealth of nations, that should thus foster destruction under the wings of victory.



The most obvious advantages springing from colonization, are derived from the interchange of such commodities as furnish employment to the population of the parent state. The commercial connexion will prove less and less advantageous to her, in proportion as she is rivalled by her colonies, and as they take off in a reduced ratio the produce and manufactures supplied by the mother-country.

From what has been said, it is perfectly reasonable, that all British settlers in colonies which have been formed through cession of territory or conquest, and the whole of their commercial concerns, should be rendered subservient to the interests and welfare of their native country, to whose laws they owe a sacred obedience, and whose supremacy they are bound to acknowledge and respect; nor can any thing absolve them from allegiance to their Sovereign, although it is apprehended that they too frequently persuade themselves that distance cancels duty.

In every case of colonization, whether by emigration, by cession, or by conquest, regulations adapted to every exigence



are indispensably necessary ; and these should never be suffered to grow obsolete, but, from time to time, be new-moulded, and unremittingly enforced, in proportion as the infant settlement rises in the scale of political importance ; in order to preserve unimpaired the authority of the parent and superior kingdom, and to secure to it all the beneficial results of well-organized colonial polity ; otherwise the most ruinous consequences may be expected, arising out of the very nature of things, and evidenced by the testimony of ages.

These restrictions, however deemed oppressive by colonists, if viewed in a true light, will be found perfectly reasonable, and every way consistent with the rules of equity. The colonists are in a great degree exonerated from the operation of those taxes levied on their fellow-subjects at home, for the general support and defence of the empire ; at the same time that they participate in the commercial advantages of the mother-country. These they will notwithstanding endeavour continually to appropriate to themselves. Demand after demand will be made, and every



concession will only stimulate fresh requisitions. In proportion, however, as they diminish the commercial prosperity of the parent state, the less equal will it be to sustain the fiscal burdens necessary to ensure national defence. Its sources of profit from abroad being cut off, it will not be able to support the expenses of the home establishment, and must of course dwindle into insignificance, or sink under its enemies. From these premises, this conclusion must unquestionably follow : That, to make the establishment, the maintenance, and the prosperity of colonial appendages, primary objects ; to promote their interests, without keeping in view the relation in which they stand to the mother-country ; and to give facility to their intercourse with foreign nations,—would be to adopt principles of government as repugnant to true policy as to common sense.

The advantages enjoyed by settlers are various and considerable : the market of the parent state is ever open to them ; and through this medium, the marts of other nations with whom she is in amity. The colonists, as has been already observed,



escape the burden of those local taxes which are often severely felt by their fellow-subjects at home ; and so long as the settlers conduct their affairs on the basis of probity and honour, they will always have credit at their command, and enjoy the benefit of commercial preference, arising out of a natural partiality which must pervade all bosoms, far exceeding any sensations that can be felt for the most favoured foreign nations. Advantages such as these must present a full compensation for any restrictive regulations under which they may lie ; and it should always be remembered, that regulations of this sort must be instituted *ex necessitate rei* ; nor can it be too often or too seriously pressed, that a firm adherence to a restrictive policy alone can secure the allegiance of the colonists, and the advantages which they bring to the mother-country ; for surely it were outrageously absurd, and altogether unnatural, that the prosperity of the original nation should be sacrificed to the well-being of her scions grafted on a foreign stock.

These principles and deductions appearing too obviously founded in truth and



sound policy to be controverted by reflecting and considerate statesmen, it shall now be the author's business to apply them impartially to a case of prodigious and vital importance to Great Britain,—the *renewal of the East India Company's Charter*; in the pure hope that the research into the fundamental principles of colonial trade, and the extended view which has here been taken of the subject, (different as it is from that of the partisans of either side, and clear of all irritation), may be deemed, generally, as disinterested and unbiassed as it is meant to be; and that the author's real object will be discerned by all his readers, viz. *the paramount and lasting welfare of Great Britain*.

So much prejudice has been excited, and so much harm has arisen, by an improper application of terms, that a considerate mind will endeavour to divest itself of their influence, on the examination of any important question. Great hostility has been created against the East India Company, by applying to their concerns the term *monopoly*, in its most invidious sense,



viz. the securing to a few, by means of arbitrary restrictions, those advantages which it is presumed might, with public benefit, be enjoyed by many. But if it shall appear, that the benefits of the India trade may be as considerable, and as widely distributed, under the Company's Charter, as they would have been, had no exclusive right existed ; the privileges which it confers cannot be considered as injurious to the public. The advantages of oriental commerce have not been confined to the Proprietors of India Stock alone, but have been shared by the whole community ; and be it ever remembered, that if the commercial funds of the Company had not been dedicated to the maintenance of the Indian Empire, and the security and consolidation of our possessions in that quarter of the globe, there would have been nothing left, at this moment, to dispute about.

Let us not be the dupes of vulgar errors ; for on the subject of monopolies, it should be considered, that any trade whatever, must, to a certain extent, be monopolised ; for it



is just as impossible to preserve commercial as political equality. \* Capital, superior information, and intelligence, influence and connexions, possessed by a few merchants, will always prevent the advantages of any trade from being enjoyed by all who may be inclined to embark in it; and the more remote the country shall be with which that trade is carried on, the fewer will be the hands into which the profits must fall. It should also be recollected, that no persons can fully enjoy the profits of a trade, without the employment of an adequate capital, and the labour of considerable application. The mode of ensuring the beneficial returns of commerce, is the same in all cases, *simplex duntaxat et unum*, whether that commerce be open to essays of general speculation, or whether it be guarded by legal provisions. In the latter case, the means of obtaining a share in its proceeds are more precisely

\* The disturbances in France commenced with the popular cry for *liberty of trade*; and let it be remembered, that they have ended in the most bloody war that has ever desolated the world; undertaken for the specific purpose of destroying all commercial freedom.



defined, and adventurers are less exposed to risk; the public, however, are in no way sufferers.

Divesting ourselves, therefore, of all prejudice, the expediency of renewing the Charter of the East India Company will manifestly appear, by showing that the country could not derive more or greater advantages from an open trade with India, than it certainly may, under *proper regulations*, of the present system. The question, in a national point of view, in which Parliament ought to consider it, is not, whether the out-ports will receive additional benefit by an open and unrestrained commerce with India?—but, whether the great interests of the country will be promoted; and whether those advantages will be enjoyed, in a more extensive degree, by those individuals who compose the trading division of the community.

The benefits which Great Britain derives from the trade with India are not solely to be estimated by the returns which pass into the treasury of the Company; but by the employment, the remuneration, the profit, and advantages of those who are in any



way, immediately or indirectly, connected with it. The freighting of an outward-bound Indianan puts trade in motion through the remotest districts of the United Kingdom. The *matériel* (if such a word may be used in this sense) of a fleet, the vessels and rigging, the stores, guns, ammunition, and provisions, are found at home; and with respect to cargoes, in addition to those parts of them which turn to a *profitable* account, the Company export large quantities of the produce and manufactures of this nation, on which, as merchants, they receive *no profit*, and in numerous instances suffer a loss. Will it therefore be contended, that from a trade of this sort no advantage accrues to the country, except that which flows into the coffers of the Company; when we consider that the thousands engaged in the manufacture of commodities, or concerned in the transit of merchandise, have obtained a profit, and that the King's Exchequer has received an accession of revenue directly, or by the operation of collateral taxes?—Can it be expected, therefore, (and it is a most serious consideration to the laborious



classes of the people of England), that any *private merchant* will conduct his business on this extended scale, and on this liberal principle? It may be urged that he will reduce the expence of freight, in order to enable him to secure a profit on his goods in the India market; but this can only be accomplished by his appropriating to himself a part of those profits enjoyed by a great number of persons now employed in the transit. Unless, therefore, the demand for British produce and manufactures shall be increased by an open trade, or an higher price shall be obtained for them in India than they fetch at present, which cannot be deemed very probable when there shall be such a competition of venders; we must assume it as a point demonstrated, that the export trade to India may afford full as great advantages under the management of the East India Company, as can possibly arise from an unrestrained communication. The supp'y of a distant country, like India, with British manufactures, is best to be accomplished by an uniform system, well digested, and steadily administered; and it is only to be effected



by a large company, or by the efforts of a few principal merchants, influenced by an intercommunity of sentiment, and uniting to furnish the necessary commodities, and to give regular employment to the manufacturers of this kingdom; who, on their part, aware of the stated calls for their goods at the proper seasons, and making their purchases at the best advantage, without the hurry and confusion incident to an uncertain sale, could enable such merchants as we have described, with no loss of profit to themselves, to carry on an export trade to India, at a cheaper rate, and with articles of a more uniform quality, than they possibly could, if left to the desultory and fluctuating exertions occasioned by the private (and not seldom clashing) speculations of individuals.

It is of great consequence that the views and projects of the merchants of any country, concerned in a specific trade, should be confided to those who are engaged in the same traffic. A just equipoise is thus maintained in the markets at home and abroad. In the East India Company,



this is perfectly understood, and is managed with admirable precision. The conquests recently made in the different islands of the Indian Sea, will provoke no ruinous paroxysm of wild adventure: very different from what so lately took place on the shores of the Atlantic! How many merchants fell sacrifices to the mania that prevailed in the commercial world on the taking of Buenos Ayres and MonteVideó! Lord Valentia gives us a true picture of the wretched effects arising from the jealous competition of the Americans trading to Mocha. One or two ships having carried coffee to America, disposed of it there to very good advantage. This was whispered about, and the American merchants having no confidence in each other, privately fitted out a great number of vessels for Mocha, on the return of the season. To the surprise of the captains and supercargoes, ship after ship entered the harbour; Arabia was inundated with American commodities, and the price of coffee was so much enhanced by this most injudicious competition, that the market was totally



spoiled. Mischiefs like this cannot occur under the auspices of the East India Company; but how they can be prevented, in case the out-ports should be admitted into the trade, it will be for the favourers of innovation to demonstrate.

If the advantages already derived from India shall not be rendered more *considerable* by risking the experiment of an open trade, is it perfectly clear, or is it probable, that they will be more *widely diffused* amongst the inhabitants of Great Britain, than we find them to be at present? —Or, is it not rather to be expected that the principal benefits will be confined to a few merchants and their dependents; and thus a monopoly of a truly dangerous species will be established, instead of a trade limited by legal, and consequently known restrictions? \*. The benefits accruing from the India trade are not engrossed by a few;

\* It should be remembered, that the measure proposed by his Majesty's Ministers does not go to destroy the principle of monopoly, although it will do away many of the advantages resulting from the present system; for the trade will be as much a monopoly in principle when confined to six ports, as when restricted to the port of London.



they are divided amongst many. To suppose that a limited number of those now engaged in the trade, share the principal advantages amongst them, is a gross error. Of the numbers who embark in the present system, many reap profits extremely disproportionate to the capital they employ, and the exertions they make. The case is the same with the Proprietors; the quantum of whose dividends has not been, nor can be, augmented beyond what it now is. The surplus would go to the state in the first instance; but it has been absorbed by the expenses which have been incurred from the necessity of repelling aggression; the taking up arms to maintain the internal peace of India (continually endangered or molested by the intrigues of the great enemy of British commerce with the native powers); and, lastly, by the necessity of expelling the French, and other nations under their influence, from the oriental islands, the ports of which, for so long a time, sent forth continual annoyance to the trade. But for the immense sums thus expended, in securing what are nothing less than *national* benefits, the debt which now oppresses the



Company would not have been incurred. With respect to the officers of the establishment either at home or abroad, it is notorious that many years must elapse before any of them can realise a moderate fortune; and it was correctly stated by the Edinburgh Reviewers, that the progress towards independence of those young men who go to India, is not so rapid as that of the same number who, with equal talents, remain at home. Of those engaged in the shipping concern, many of them receive no interest on their capital, and none more than a small one. The commanders and subordinate officers, a class of men of acknowledged talent, tried integrity, and great respectability in society, are justly entitled to consideration in these pages; but it is lamentable to think how few of them, considering their numbers, obtain the means of retiring from their laborious employments at that period of life which most requires, if not affluence, at least ease, repose, and a fair competency. Where then are we to look for the signs and tokens, the morbid symptoms of that bloated monopoly, which so frequently furnishes a sub-



ject for vulgar declamation or popular harangues? It must be observed, too, that every article used or exported by the Company is bought by *contract*, and that all its imports are disposed of by *public sale*; and being brought to one market, a great emporium is thus constituted for Indian goods; and although nothing should appear to be gained by the Indian trade, abstractedly considered, this measure secures a great demand for British manufactures, of vast importance to the country. And is this a system to break up, to demolish, and to throw into inextricable confusion, in the hope of making some fancied, some Utopian improvement? Is fact to give way to supposition? is reality to be bartered for hope? is theory to supersede experience? It is hard to say of what sort the waking dreams indulged in by the advocates of an open and unguarded trade may have been; but this is clear, that however limited the profits of those who employ the largest capitals in the affairs of the East India Company may be, the sources of general advantage (if advantage it may be deemed or styled) are as freely open to every indi-



vidual, as those of any trade whatsoever ; India stock may be purchased by any one ; the contracts are open to all who choose to send in proposals ; the doors of the Company's sale-rooms are shut to none ; and offices of responsibility or trust are attainable under the Company, as in every department of the active world, by the usual steps ; by the assiduities and zeal of friendship, by the exercise of industry, by the display of talent and the proof of integrity. The word *monopoly*, in its odious and revolting sense, is altogether inapplicable to the system of commerce maintained by the Honourable East India Company.

If the country in general reaps advantages from the Indian trade under its present wise limitations ;—unless it can previously be proved that superior benefits will result from an alteration of system, compensating the distress, and overwhelming confusion, that must inevitably attend the forcing of the trade into new channels, after it has flowed in its present bed with a fertilising stream for more than two centuries ;—so tremendous a change ought not to be attempted, so hazardous an experi-



ment ought not to be tried. The Proprietors, and all who are connected with the Company, from the Chairman to the humblest labourer in the warehouses at home; from the Governor-General to the servant that supports his palanquin in India; are justified in the confidence which they repose in the collective wisdom of the Legislature, and the hope which they entertain that their interests will neither be sacrificed at the shrine of popularity; nor compromised in order to establish a preponderant interest in the out-ports; nor abandoned to the scramble of those who certainly do not compose a larger, or a more respectable, or a more trust-worthy part of the community than themselves, in their several classes.

That the East India Company should be allowed to possess territory gained by right of conquest, is a subject which has been often discussed. This, abstractedly considered, is a question for publicists to decide. There can be no doubt, however, that if the conquered provinces belong to the State, the Company has an equitable claim on the Empire, for a reimbursement of the ex-



penses which have been incurred by adding to, or preserving and defending, her dominions. With regard to the demesnes which the Company holds in consequence of grants from the native princes, or purchases from the oriental possessors, it is clear that these princes, and others, had the right of ceding lands, and conferring authority to rule them, or of parting with territory or power for a valuable consideration ; and that if the terms on which these grants, purchases, or surrenders were made, cannot any longer be complied with by the Company,—the lands, and the prerogatives attached to them, ought to revert to the aboriginal proprietors, unless it appear that the Company are invested with power to make them over to the State for a just and fair equivalent. Such property, derived from the munificence of Sovereigns, has been deemed sacred in England ; and it were a libel on the Legislature to suspect that Parliament will invade it. The property of the East India Company will surely be as much respected as that of the meanest subjects of the King.

It may be proper, however, to look at



this part of the argument in another light. The Company possess invaluable territorial property in India, ceded in the way of negotiation, or granted in free gift, by the sovereign proprietors of the soil. Possessions of this nature are exactly of the same sort with those which in Europe arise out of the bounty of crowned heads to individuals; whether bestowed as rewards for services rendered, or encouragement to merit, or simply as marks of royal favour and princely liberality. If property of this nature is to be wrested out of the hands of the Company, for whom is it destined? Is it to be given to strangers? Is it to be restored to the representatives of the original granters? Or, lastly, is it to be confiscated for the use of the State? If the State is to seize it, then it will become us to advert to the principle on which this is to be perpetrated. Will the necessities of the State afford a sufficient apology for a strong measure like this? Then will many great landholders in the United Kingdom be placed in a perilous situation; for the principle is equally as applicable to multitudes of them at home, as to the Company, in its



remote possessions. The old maxim, *nul-  
lum tempus occurrit regi*, may be expected  
to revive : what is now deemed indefeasible  
property, may turn out to be held on the  
frail tenure of caprice ; the forest of In-  
glewood, and many old English parks,  
forests, and chases, bestowed by our an-  
cient monarchs as the rewards of valour,  
the honourable requitals of political wis-  
dom, or the tokens of affection, may be  
resumed at the pleasure of Administra-  
tion. And be it ever remembered, that  
the princes of India have far more power  
over their domains, than any king of  
England possesses over the property of  
the Crown, in the limited monarchy which  
is the glory, and the boast, and the bless-  
ing of England.

With respect to revenue, which is ad-  
mitted to be rather an affair of Govern-  
ment than of the Company, although it is  
equally clear that every body must feel an  
interest in the fair and just collection of  
legitimate duties, as every evasion of them  
is an injury to the advantages of the ho-  
nourable merchant, and all must contribute  
to make up the deficiency ; let us ask



how, or in what manner, this branch of the public service can be better administered, can be made more productive, or performed at less expense, than at present? It is self-evident that frauds must be fewer, and the establishment of revenue officers on a smaller scale, when the trade is confined to one port, and to a single dock, than if it were scattered round the country. The walls which surround the East India Dock afford no less security against pilferers and plunderers, than against smugglers, and those who are masters of a thousand contrivances to defraud the revenue. Shall we look for greater security in the bays, creeks, and inlets which indent an extended line of coast on each side of our islands; many of them affording convenient landing-places in districts which are thinly inhabited? The size of the India ships now at once points out to the revenue-cutters those vessels, amongst a number, that require attention; but when vessels of only four hundred tons burthen, freighted with Indian produce, are floating along our coasts, written instructions can possibly su-



whence they come. In the bosom of the port of London, the greatest emporium in the world, where the principles of trade are so thoroughly understood, and where there are so many eyes to detect offenders, who can only expect safety in solitude and darkness, every possible method has been devised, and put in force, to place the revenue in such a situation as almost to bid defiance to the artifices of the most ingenious dishonesty. The erection of the East India dock, the publicity of the Commercial Road, and the covered caravans which convey goods from the docks to the Company's warehouses, have completed a system which has occupied the attention of Government, employed for many years in attempts to extinguish smuggling. Can it be consistent with common prudence, or can it meet with the approbation of that class of the King's Ministers charged with the care of the revenue, to abandon the securities which have been devised? And, surely, it will not be asserted that any system more lax, or less rigid, should be adopted; that fewer precautions will ensure what is due to the Customs or the Excise.



Now, let us ask, are there docks at the out-ports on the principle of those at Black-wall, prepared to receive the commerce of India within their inclosure? If they do not yet exist, let the projectors of the unlimited system calculate the sums it will require, and the labour it will demand, and the time it will take to form them. Let them next consider how they shall frame and establish departments within those docks, filled with experienced functionaries, the guardians of public and private property, attending to the most minute concerns either of revenue or trade; and it will be for those who manage the affairs of the Exchequer to consider the armies of Custom-House and Excise Officers which must be marshalled in the out-ports; and for those senators who watch over the public expenditure, to estimate the expenses which must be incurred by the folly of doing that in many places, at great risk, and probably very inadequately, which at present is done so perfectly, and so economically, in one. It will also afford matter of serious reflection for those members of Parliament, in either House, who look with a jealous eye to the



extension of ministerial influence ; to weigh well, whether the proposed alteration will not increase that preponderancy of power, in one of the three estates of the realm ; which, in their judgment, has already too great a sway in directing the affairs of the nation. This is not urged in the spirit of hostility to the present Ministers ; far from it. The author respects them much ; but he knows human nature too well, not to be alarmed at the increase of power which, in the event of adopting the new plan of conducting the Indian trade, must needs be thrown into hands prepared to grasp and wield, to their own advantage, an accession of strength. To all these sources of influence must be added that arising out of the patronage annexed to the fleets of revenue-cutters, and other vessels, filled with officers of different descriptions, which must cruise without intermission along our coasts, in order to prevent, or check, if it be possible, the attempts of those concerned in contraband enterprises. Out of all this arises an argument of considerable importance :—If in the memorable contest which took place in 1783, between the country at large,



(which at that time espoused the cause of the India Company), and the then Administration, the patronage of Leadenhall Street was not allowed, on constitutional grounds, to be transferred to the disposal of the King's Ministers, nor yet of Parliament itself; is it to be expected that the fancied, certainly not the real, interests of a few of the out-ports, will induce the country to connive at the weight of patronage which the new experiment on commerce will cast into the ministerial scale? Mr. Rose published, with laudable pride, an account of the reduction of revenue-officers effected by Mr. Pitt. Could the disembodied spirit of Mr. Pitt take cognizance of the projected re-appointment, and the prodigious increase of those people, (always odious in a free state), for no other reason except the hope of appeasing some unquiet persons who have involved themselves in temporary difficulties in their own immediate lines of commerce; would he not (together with his great colleague, Lord Melville, a consummate master of every circumstance connected with the India Company) reprobate the conduct of his successors; who



nevertheless have often professed to tread in his steps, and adhere to his counsels? When the Company's Charter was renewed under the controul of those two great statesmen, the trade was continued in the same channels in which they found it, after the most minute investigation of the measure in all its points, and a degree of serious consideration, far surpassing any that has taken place on the present occasion. This assertion may be made with truth; and it is hoped that it will be received, in a certain quarter, with candour. Now, we would ask, whether any, and what, mighty alterations have taken place in the condition or the conduct of the Company, or in the relation in which it stands to the country, which can justify an innovation so portentous in itself, and so replete with hazard to the community? And, appealing to the honourable sense of justice, which pervades the hearts of Britons, we would further ask, whether the Company, after having fought the nation's battles in every quarter of the East, expelled the enemy from the Continent, and driven him from the islands of India, and



having on this account incurred a debt amounting to twenty millions sterling; have not a fair claim on the Legislature to continue to them the possession of their ancient privileges?

Although it has been urged, in popular reasoning, that the East India Company must always have been aware of the limited duration of their chartered rights; and that, therefore, whatever plans were adopted, or expenses were risked, still they should have contemplated the termination of their exclusive trade at the end of twenty-one years from the date of their Charter: Yet after charters had been confided to them for two hundred years; after the decisive opinion of the most celebrated statesmen had been repeatedly expressed, that the Company afforded the most legitimate and safe channel of commercial communication with India; could any suspicion arise, that a renewal of the Charter, and a continuation of the Company's privileges, could take the form of a question, or become a matter of doubt? Had the East India Company acted on such narrow motives, or had it been swayed



by such contracted counsels, when summoned to prepare for warlike operations ; or had the Company, at that moment, sat down to a cold-blooded calculation of profit and loss depending on the brief duration of the present Charter, instead of putting their troops and ships in motion, and their stores and treasures in requisition, they would have merited contempt, and deserved abandonment. Had they considered, in that exigency, their own interests as separated, or separable, from the interests of the British Empire, they had earned disgrace, and might expect to be paid with reprobation. On the contrary, with a patriot ardour, scarcely equalled, certainly not excelled by any class of their fellow-subjects, however opulent, however dignified ; they dedicated all the energies of their commercial capital to the great national object of preserving the British Empire in the East : and with a liberal spirit, the reverse of monopoly, they conceded to the merchants of this country the general navigation of the Eastern seas ;\*

\* See the late concessions of trading as far as to the me-



excepting only those districts in which strangers might trench on certain peculiar branches of the Company's immediate commerce with the peninsula and China ; with a view of preventing that impolitic intrusion into the interior of the country, which might endanger the civil authority vested in the Company. On a principle of public spirit, and actuated by a sense of public duty, they gave every possible facility to the measures of Government, and they paid the navy and army appropriated to the defence of India ; a circumstance in which the Company stand alone ; for there is no other instance on record, in which a military expedition, undertaken by a nation, has been supported and paid by a commercial body of its liege subjects. Nor is this all ; for it must not be forgotten that the Company, at these eventful periods, and at all times, furnished tonnage for stores, troops, and naval equipments, not only without limit, but without charge. They have also given ships of the line to the state, and have pro-

ridian of the Persian Gulf, and, south of the equator, to any extent eastward.



vided and maintained three regiments for the preservation of the metropolis, and the defence of this country, if required. When the Gazettes which recorded the glorious result of the Company's exertions, were hardly dry from the press; will posterity believe, or will our contemporaries credit, that then, even then, plans were maturing, petitions were preparing, and interest was making, to wrest out of the Company's hands a trade which has enabled them to render such important services to the common-weal; or that the King's Ministers should entertain an idea of granting a participation in the Company's privileges to those who, without contributing a farthing to them, have a share, with the nation at large, in all the beneficial consequences arising from the burdens so nobly borne by the Company?

From the most impartial view, therefore, of this great subject; from the most dispassionate consideration of which so interesting a question will admit; from a diligent perusal of what has been urged to the Legislature and the public, through the medium of the press; after many con-



versations with the well-informed, and after much patient attention to public debate—this most reasonable conclusion may fairly be drawn, that any violent alteration of the present system, or any material trespass upon it, will assuredly occasion, either immediately or ultimately, the most serious injuries and eventful consequences which can befall any country. They will be felt throughout the Empire; and probably in the following order,—London will be the first sufferer; the speculators in the out-ports will next sink in the vortex of ruin; and, what is a most tremendous consideration, the whole of India, (from the mouths of the Indus to the confines of Aracan, from Thibet to Cape Comorin), with all its islands and dependencies, will exhibit a horrible scene of insubordination, confusion, and revolt; for however trivial the beginning may appear, the seeds of all this mischief will be sown by the intrusion of speculative adventurers. Wherever many are ruled or restrained by a few, the rawest student in the science of politics will inform us, that all authority is founded on *opinion*. The writer of these sheets would not will-



ingly alarm the public mind further than is necessary to rouse it to a due examination of the Indian controversy ; but he thinks it his duty to state, that already, owing to the interposition of a power superior to that residing for such a length of time in the East India Company, (an innovation which has been felt and reasoned upon in India), the native princes and states are at a pause ; and are beginning to doubt the stability of the present Government, and to question the permanency of existing treaties. Staggered in their confidence by the deference paid to the King's authority,\* and the King's servants (for this has not escaped their penetration) ; observing that some of the highest offices, the Commander-in-Chief, the Judges and Admirals,

\* It is not meant to be denied that the King's authority is, and must be, supreme ; and that his Majesty's appointment of the great officers employed in the Government of India, is legal, having the sanction of the Parliament, and the force of a law ; but, so far as opinion weighs with the millions of the Indian population, it had been a wise and politic measure, if the Legislature thought it necessary to fix such appointments in the Crown, that they should still take place through the ostensible medium of the Company ; for it must ever be deplored that the co-existence of two authorities should have been erected in the teeth of Indian prepossessions.



are all appointed by the British Government; and that since the commencement of this change, and through the instrumentality of these personages, the whole peninsula has been subjugated, and a constant succession of wars has taken place, contrary to the policy of a commercial Company, influenced ever by the dictates of prudence and economy; remarking that all the political affairs of their country are guided by a power in England superior to that of the Company—the native princes can only look upon the Court of Directors as the Dewan of the English Government; and may naturally be induced to expect that the assumption of the Company's authority into other hands, will be followed by that of their territory, and by the cancelling of every treaty subsisting between them and the Company, at the pleasure of the higher power.

The transfer of a native army of 150,000 men\* will not be very easily effected. The attempt will be hazardous, and may occasion such a convulsion as will shake our Indian possessions to their centre;—considering the interest which every prince



in the country must naturally feel in prompting a struggle, and promoting discord. And this is another matter which demands most serious attention.

When we consider the great importance attaching on the connexion subsisting between this country and India, and how much the peace, and prosperity, and manufacturing interest, of the British Empire, depend upon it ; no minor motive of policy ought to induce us to risk an alteration in the form of the Indian Government, or the mode of conducting the commerce carried on between the mother-country and her Oriental colonies. No topic applying to this subject can be irrelevant to the question.—Let us therefore advert to another circumstance which may endanger the tranquillity of the two countries. Should unlimited access to the ports of India be allowed to adventurers, attracted thither from many quarters by the hope of enriching themselves ; it appears not very difficult to predict the consequences. The Company's Government, shorn, as it has been, of authority, and diminished in power, could exercise no very efficient



controul over the shoals of people who will find their way to India. Having sailed from the out-ports without licence from the Company, it is not to be supposed that they would yield obedience to the regulations prescribed by the Court of Directors, or acknowledge any jurisdiction in the accredited officers of the Company, established in the different presidencies of India. They would traverse the country in all directions, rivals of each other, and all of them rivalling the Company. The course of trade would be thrown into confusion; the markets would contend with each other, to their mutual destruction; jealousies would arise between district and district, inflamed by the artifices of a set of people whose sole object must be to accumulate fortunes with rapidity; whose views can only be temporary and selfish; who can have no interest in the permanence of Indian prosperity; and upon whom, in a short space of time, (succeeded, as they would be, by fresh adventurers), no orders of the Court of Directors, no resolutions of the Board of Controul, nor any vote of Parliament itself, would have any effect.



We should consider here the distance of space intervening between the seat of Government at home, and the scene of operation chosen by these eager votaries of wealth ; and we must also take into the account the magnitude of India and its immense population, compared with those of the British islands.

If any alteration should take place in the existing laws under which the affairs of India are administered, enough has been urged already, to prove that such alteration should be of a nature calculated to render that country more dependent upon Britain ; or, if possible, more useful to her. The changes petitioned for, must be, of all others, the most dangerous : the loss of our American colonies should have taught us wisdom ; and the explosion occasioned by the French Revolution, produced by the endeavour of theorists, professedly to better the condition of the country, and indeed that of the human race generally, should make us very cautious how we venture upon any measure which may raise a fermentation amongst the myriads of India. That some modifications of the trade, to a certain



degree, may be proper, will not be denied ; but, as to the propriety of adopting the sweeping changes proposed, since the wisest and greatest statesmen have already deprecated them, it may be asked, whom shall we account the best judges of the question as it stands at present—the ill-informed petitioners for ruin at the out-ports ; his Majesty's present Ministers ; or the India Directors, whose peculiar interests would not be injured by the proposed changes ; for their patronage and emoluments will not be touched, and none of them are large holders of India Stock. The Directors have for many years contemplated and managed the concerns of India, and are in possession of a mass of experience which has been accumulating ever since the year 1600, the forty-third of Queen Elizabeth, when the first Charter of the Company was granted. We should remember, too, that the opinion of the Directors is founded on the judgment of those great statesmen, Messrs. Pitt, Dundas, and Fox ; and is supported by that of the merchants of London, who trade to all parts of the globe, and who must be deemed, what they are in fact,



the most accomplished traders, and best informed commercial characters, in the world.

Independently of commerce, let even the enemies of this country declare, what a degree of political importance arises to Britain from her possessions in the East, under all the disadvantages, as some people might be disposed to say, of the existing monopoly. The weight and consequence which India (triumphant as the Company has been of late in that quarter of the world) gives to Britain in the balance of power, are so great that they ought not to be endangered by adopting the schemes of interested projectors. The dismemberment of the Anglo-Indian Empire would be a most awful, if not a fatal event; and that government which paves the way leading to such a catastrophe, incurs most serious and deep responsibility.

It has been held forth that the proposed alteration in the Indian system, will tend to promote the general welfare. It is presumed, that what is contained in these pages, has shewn such a supposition to be a mere pretext, set up *ad captandum*, to



impose upon many for the ideal advantage of a few. It is incumbent upon the partisans of change to substantiate their assertions by proof. Parliament has hitherto, and with incalculable benefit to the public, proceeded upon solid grounds. The Acts of Parliament arise out of a basis of *evidence*; the clamours of the out-ports will not avail at the bar of the House of Commons, or above-stairs in a committee-room. There, declamation passes for nothing; and there it is, or in the Upper Chamber of Parliament and its apartments, under the sagacious presidency of the Chancellor of Great Britain, or that of Lord Walsingham (from whose indefatigable labours and consummate knowledge of business, the public has derived innumerable advantages); there it is, that Lord Buckinghamshire\* will learn “whether the nation is without an alternative” respecting the government and the commerce of India; whether the welfare of the country will be secured by laying open the Peninsula to the speculations of adventurers; whether the tranquillity of the factories and other settlements will be maintained amidst the shock of contending



interests; and whether Parliament will not determine it to be inexpedient, impolitic, and unwise, to disturb the Company in the possession which it yet holds, and the degree of authority which it is yet permitted to retain in India?

That the British colonies in other parts of the world, in North America, for instance, and the West Indies, are open to all classes of the King's subjects engaged in trade, is most true, and is readily admitted. But these colonies are, and have been always, under the immediate jurisdiction of the Crown. The King appoints their governors, and all the officers, civil and military; the constituted authorities hold direct communication with the sovereign power at home; they administer justice with vigour, they meet every emergency with promptitude, and can at will enforce obedience to their lawful commands. Compared with the remoteness of India, those colonies are in a manner before our doors, and under the eyes of Government, with which they have at all times a speedy intercourse. The authority exercised over Europeans throughout the extended dis-



tricts of India, is in comparison but shadowy and unsubstantial. The people of England are not aware of this. The governing power in India is *sui generis*; for we may recognise there—first, The authority of the native princes; secondly, that of the Company, erected upon grants from those princes, or treaties with them, or delegated, by virtue of the Charter, from the King; and, thirdly, the imperial sovereignty of the Crown of Great Britain. All these are curiously blended together, and form a singular species of polity, sanctioned, partly by law, and partly by prescription, and supported by opinion. With regard to Europeans, however, all residents in India enter into covenants with the Company, finding security for their good conduct; and contempt of the Company's authority can only be punished by sending the offending party from the country. But, during the continuance of peace, he will have abundant opportunity of sheltering himself under a neutral flag; or, at any rate, may occasion, as has been already the case, tedious and expensive investigations in our courts of law.



. It has been observed, that in consequence of the wise provisions of the Navigation-Act, the intercourse of foreign nations with our western colonies is restrained; whereas, on the contrary, with regard to India, it is said, and probably truly, that *British capital* has often been employed in trading with India, under the cover of *foreign flags*. But it is to be feared, that in the event of conceding the prayer of their petitions to the out-ports, after the disappointed adventurers shall have parted with the sanguine hopes which at present cause their bosoms to pant; after their golden dreams shall have ended in positive and actual losses—the privileges with which they will be invested may, at no great distance of time, present that anomalous prodigy in the trading world, the converse of the last mentioned case, *foreign capital embarked under British flags*. Thus Englishmen will degenerate into carriers of Indian produce from their own settlements to their own ports, for the benefit of foreigners; much in the way that the Spanish galleons bring the precious metals of Peru and Potosi to Cadiz; not on the account of Spanish, but British and other



merchants. *Sic vos, non vobis, fertis aratra, boves, &c.*

The Government in India having availed itself of the treasure shipped by the Company at home for commercial purposes, and having appropriated it to the liquidation of the expenses attending war-like operations, and having retained the formidable vessels belonging to the Company, and employed them in the defence of India; a question naturally arises out of the probability that the same measures may be resorted to again, on a similar emergency. In this event, when the Company's ships shall be fitted out for the general service of the public, is the trade of the out-ports to continue without a check, whilst the Company is to stand the brunt of battle; and their ships, built for commercial purposes, shall be freighted with British thunder? The Company's patriotism is well known to the country; but will the country assign *honour* to the India Company merely, whilst their rivals in the out-ports shall be in the quiet possession of the whole commerce? The dividends of India Stock must probably suffer diminu-



tion, whilst the Company covers itself with glory. — Will the country allow it to sit under the barren and deleterious shade of the laurels it has earned; whilst a tide of wealth sets into the out-ports, with its currents quickened by the Company's exertion, to its own assured loss, and their sole gain? The merchants at the out-ports are no doubt honourable men; and as their ships will not be applicable to the service of the nation, on the recurrence of such difficulties, it is to be hoped that they will not object to compensate the Company for the treasure with which they may furnish the state, and the vessels they may place at its disposal.

In fact, the whole measure is replete with difficulties, and pregnant with many evils. It does not seem possible to maintain any intercourse with India, beneficial to Great Britain, except through the medium of the East India Company.

However, it is not intended in these pages to assert, or to insist, that the Company has never erred, or has done every thing, numerically, which the country had a right to expect. A friend, as the author avowedly is, to the first trading company



in the world, he cannot but deplore that truth and candour oblige him to record some of the vacillations in council and in system which they have betrayed. In Mr. Pitt's and Lord Melville's time, repeated complaints were made to those eminent characters, that the East India Company did not give due encouragement to the export of British goods, or the import of raw materials for our manufacturers; and that the remittance of private fortunes from India had not that facility which ought to have been afforded. Hence, in the year 1793, the supply of a given quantity of tonnage was stipulated for with the Company, and enjoined by the Act of Parliament which was then passed; and a specific rate was agreed upon for freight on a peace-transit. In case the Company's tonnage in India should eventually prove inadequate to the demands upon it, the governments there were empowered to grant licences to country-ships, which were allowed by an Act of Parliament to import produce during the continuance of the war, and for the space of eighteen months subsequent to the termination of hostilities.



The complaints which had been then preferred were thus remedied, yet in such a way as to preserve the rights of the Company inviolate; the imports and exports being confined to the port of London, and every thing passing under the eye of the Company. London, and the Company's warehouses, afforded, as they had done for the space of two hundred years, a depot for all the produce of India; and as a matter productive of mutual benefit to every one concerned, the goods were all to be sold by the Company at the usual sales. The introduction of India shipping, thus legalized, afforded an opportunity, cagerly embraced by the residents in India, to send their goods home in their own vessels; and although the ostensible reason for this choice was the high war-freight of the Company's shipping, yet there is abundant proof on record,\* that other motives existed in their minds, and helped to sway them to the preference given. The ships, on their return to India, were laden by the several houses to which they had been

\* See "A. Review of the Shipping System of the East India Company," published 1798.



consigned ; but with a very small proportion of the manufactures of this country ; as may be evinced by the statement of a cargo in the Third Report of the Court of Directors in the year 1801. Thus a monopoly was established by the residents in India, embracing both the transit and trade. The consequence of this indulgence, and the exclusion of British merchants and British shipping, produced a most serious controversy between his Majesty's Government and the East India Company ; which ended in an engagement, on the part of the Company, to furnish a description of shipping for the sole purpose of private trade ; and permission was given to the India ship-owners to supply a proportion, subject to the same conditions as those furnished by British owners ; of which permission they have never availed themselves. These vessels were to be so completely equipped as to surpass any private ships whatever ; and the Court, in order to give every facility to the merchants, engaged that the ships should never be detained more than three months unemployed after delivery of their cargo from India, if competent to



proceed : they further undertook to furnish the dead-weight ; and in case the merchants should not lade the ships, they engaged to do it on their own account ; and, in consequence, some ships were taken up at 12*l.* per ton, and none higher than 15*l.* peace-freight, out and home. This arrangement, if fully acted on, was one of those liberal concessions which will ever do honour to the East India Company ; but it is to be regretted that the Company did not follow up and act upon this principle in a more ample degree, by furnishing freight to all descriptions of persons requiring it ; by giving notice of the quantity of tonnage provided, and confining this species of shipping, as was originally planned, to direct voyages without detention ; and by continuing this cheap system of employing extra ships, instead of garbling and tampering with so excellent a plan, by the appropriation of those ships to other purposes, and taking up temporary vessels at higher rates of freight. Had they persevered in the intended system, every cause of dissatisfaction would have been suppressed. The employment of ships of 400



tons burthen, equipped as they are at the out-ports, can never furnish an adequate transit for cargoes from such a distant market as India. Shipping of this sort may suit the American nation, which has never till lately encountered a maritime war. Convoys cannot be afforded, as is the case with fleets bound to the West Indies; and although the smaller ships of the out-ports may now safely navigate the Indian seas, through the exertions of the Company, at whose expense they have been cleared of hostile flags, yet still the risk of homeward-bound vessels continues very great.

The exclusion of all the subjects of this realm from the Eastern hemisphere, (excepting the immediate servants of the Company, the licenced residents, and his Majesty's forces), is a constituent part of the tenure by which the Charter is held; and it is highly expedient that it should be so. As the Proprietors, by continued grants and repeated Charters, have been so singularly favoured in their enterprises, it was natural to expect that the Court of Directors, and their servants in India,



should be extremely solicitous to promote, amongst the natives of that country, the interests of British commerce, and the consumption of home-manufactures. It was reasonable to hope that the agents of the Company would do their utmost to discourage any rivalry with British commodities; that the export from hence to India, of British produce, and British goods, would have suffered no diminution through any improvident encouragement of Oriental productions, either natural or manufactured; that a predilection for their native land, and the force of custom, would have secured, with all Europeans in our Indian settlements, a marked preference for every article exported from Britain; in a word, that British and Indian commodities could never have come in competition with each other in the East, but that either the feelings of nationality, or of patriotism, would have preserved to the former every possible commercial advantage. It is but too truly to be apprehended that the reverse of all this is the fact; and that throughout India, colonized as it is by the natives of these



islands, Oriental productions have been encouraged, the manufactures of Britain copied and rivalled, her commercial exports diminished, and the interests of the Indian settlements have been chiefly considered, with a marked preference to those of the mother country. Lord Chatham averred that America should not be allowed to make a hob-nail whilst England could supply her. However difficult the accomplishment of this might be in the case of America, the principle is a wise one ; and is surely applicable to India, where every person taught to imitate an article of European manufacture, learns his craft to the detriment of a British artisan.

It is now asserted, and with truth, that India stands in need of few articles which this country can supply. This cessation of demand for home-productions in the Indian market, is the lamentable result of the culpable infatuation which has promoted, in the districts of Hindostan, the manufacturing arts of Europe. This evil, so destructive of the prosperity of Great Britain, has increased with the enlargement of our settlements ; but what will be the



consequence of an open trade? The out-ports, and even London itself, will in course of time send out multitudes of adventurers; extensive manufactories will be established in every part of India; the British looms, forges, and potteries, will presently suffer under the effects of this mistaken system; our Oriental colonies will feel themselves independent on Britain; our exportation of the produce of British labour will suffer vast diminution; and money will probably become the only medium of commerce from this country—bullion our only export. The cotton mills of Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and Scotland, will experience the ill effects of the projected communication with India. At all events, it is to be hoped, that in the new Charter some prudential regulations will be introduced to secure the wakeful attention of the Court of Directors to the manufacturing interests of *this country*.

It is by no means a matter of difficulty to substantiate these observations by evidence. Indeed, proof has become hardly necessary; for it is notorious that India has made rapid advances in the produc-



tion of European manufactures, and the adoption of British improvements in mechanics. In many articles they have already established a rivalry with us; and, it is possible, (nay, if an open trade should be conceded, it is *probable*), that they will be able to supply themselves with those goods which we yet are able to export. India is not without copper, iron, lead, and other metals; and what must astonish every one who has the least smattering of *the policy of commerce*, iron works are about to be established in India under the sanction of Government; and samples of steel have been transmitted home, equal to any made in Britain. Thus will some of the most essential articles of British manufacture, in a short time, produce no commercial benefits to our country, so far as India is concerned, through the competency of the natives to fabricate them, instructed by the mistaken zeal of Englishmen, and supported by the East India Company, and by Government itself.

It behoves the public to look narrowly into the probable consequences of the projected innovations. The Court of Direc-



tors, themselves, have not secured to their country all the advantages that she might have enjoyed from the wholesome restrictions which they had it in their power to lay upon trade; and they have connived at, if not encouraged, attempts in manufactures, from which we could only look for contingent and remote benefits, whilst the detriment occasioned by them is direct and immediate.

Were a list of the articles formerly exported to India made out, and compared with the goods which that country now takes from us, we should be utterly astonished at the various manufactures of which she no longer stands in need;—Asia, at this day, preparing for her own use, and the consumption of many of our countrymen, resident in her territories, what formerly was supplied by the skill and industry of Europe. The very stores and equipment of their shipping, canvas, cordage, &c. have attained their present excellence from the inquiries, investigations, experiments, and improvements, suggested by the East India Company and their servants. But while the naval department



of Government at home (actuated by short-sighted and false principles of economy) has overlooked the claims of this country to the employment of her manufacturers; is it to be expected, that the residents in the peninsula of India will be swayed by any motives to a different policy in favour of Great Britain? Unwise as we are in thus devising, for temporary purposes, the means of our own abasement, if not ruin, at some future day; let us look at the crisis to which such mismanagement must needs reduce our native country. It must continue to sink lower and lower, till at length India, once the cause of British prosperity, will become the instrument of its degradation.

We have, as yet, only contemplated manufactures of a minor class;—it is now necessary to call the attention of the public to others not simply commercial, but such as have been always considered of the first importance to the well-being, and even the existence of Great Britain as an independent power. It is hardly possible to conceive a measure more impolitic, or more pregnant with detriment and danger to this country,



than *the building of ships in India* on the scale now adopted. This novel practice is encouraged by every possible influence. It is a plan, the evils of which are already perceptibly felt; and if it be not restrained by some specific regulations, it must superinduce the most ruinous consequences. It visits with distress not only those opulent men who (relying on the maintenance of the principles on which the Navigation-Act is founded), have formed and kept up large establishments; but multitudes of industrious men, forming the numerous class of shipwrights and artificers, trained to their business, and depending for subsistence on the maritime exertions of Great Britain. On the river Thames, in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, there are no less than six of these great establishments, competent to the building not only vessels suited to the trade of the East India Company, but line of battle ships. These dock-yards, in the space of a few years, have supplied fifty sail of the line; whilst the King's yards have been appropriated to giving the navy those necessary repairs which are constantly and inevitably requi-



site in time of war. The furnishing employment to about five thousand men, heretofore engaged in the dock-yards on the Thames, has already become a matter of such urgency, that several new frigates have been put on the stocks by Government, with a view of enabling these industrious and valuable men to support themselves and families. The immediate cause of all this misery, which may be regarded but "as the beginning of sorrows," is the strange policy of building Indiamen at Bengal, and other places in the East. Thus another branch of manufacture, and that of supreme importance, is slipping out of our hands. Are people yet, at this hour of the day, to learn that labour is wealth? Let us look for a moment at the bearing of this argument on the conduct of the East India Company. The Company itself enjoys, by the favour of this nation, an exclusive privilege of trading to India;—now is it not a matter to be deplored, that the Company should employ the natives of India in building their ships, to the actual injury and positive loss of this nation, from which they



received their Charter. Mistaken as the Company have been in this particular, it is not very difficult to divine what will take place, if an unrestrained commerce shall be permitted: if British capital shall be carried to India by British speculators, we may expect a vast increase of dock-yards in that country, and a proportional increase of detriment to the artificers of Britain.

If it be supposed, that India-built ships may be hired upon more favourable terms to the Company than vessels constructed at home: this is not the case; although the repairs of ships built with teak cannot cost a tithe of the charges incurred by repairing those built in this country.

Disputes on the subject of freight have subsisted for thirty years past, and have occasioned many misunderstandings, and much ill-will. The favourite ideas concerning India-built vessels, and other ideas, about to be noticed, have inspired unpleasant jealousies on one side, and have prompted many complaints on the other. That the freight paid to British ships will



not produce an interest of 5l. per cent. on the capital embarked, has been made evident by the calculations of the Company's own officers. The eagerness to obtain commands, however, has produced, under the shew of free and open competition, a ruinous speculation. Commands may be said to be actually purchased, under the colour of reduced freight. There is a circumstance which is decidedly in favour of the ships built in India (and equally destructive to the interests of the British artificer, or British owner), and this is, that the India-built vessels have the advantage of an entire freight home, before a contract for general freight is made. All these things make against the mother country, and are contrary to the principles of wise colonial policy. It is not, however, in the nature of things, that errors of this magnitude can subsist much longer, without producing a convulsion. These manifold trespasses on British rights, will lead to consequences, which it is clearly the duty of the Company and Government seriously to weigh, with all the attention which the subject demands. In contending for the



renewal of an exclusive Charter, and the continuance of the India trade to the port of London, it may be reasonably asked of the Company, if they are to sacrifice none of their prejudices to the interests of this country? If they are to divest themselves of the power with which the nation entrusts them, by surrendering to the Oriental residents such advantages as serve to ripen their independence, and to make them rivals to Great Britain; it becomes a duty to contend for our country and our countrymen against Asiatic interlopers, although the changes in the Indian system petitioned for, those blind suggestions of sanguine ignorance, cannot be too strongly deprecated. Impartiality and equity compel the author to remonstrate with the Company, and to demand for England her just share in the advantages resulting from the Indian trade. That India and Britain should reciprocate in these benefits, is right and proper; but it is neither fair nor politic that the "reciprocity should be all on one side."

Are the merchants' yards to be shut up, or reduced in their establishments, to suit



the erroneous policy of the India Company; when they have been admitted by the Court of Directors to be so competent to assist Government under all the exigencies of the state? Or can the British landholder bear, without emotions of apprehension and repugnance, that from the abundance of teak in the forests of India, his timber is to suffer a reduction in value? In the first place, the shipwrights in India will defraud our own artificers of their birthright;—employment, and the profits arising from the combination of labour and skill; and, secondly, the raw material of the Oriental colonies will be brought in competition with that which is of home growth. Thus both in manufacture and produce the colonies will injure the mother country. This inversion of every principle of sound policy must operate to the discouragement of the growth of timber. Can it be expected that noblemen and gentlemen will pay so much attention as heretofore to the inclosing and the preservation of their woods? This may produce, in the end, that very scarcity of timber, which the patrons of India ship-



building, and teak importation, would persuade us already exists; and this scarcity may prove fatal to Great Britain at a period when we shall no longer have the option of felling teak at our own pleasure. It is not true that a scarcity exists at present in any degree to the extent stated; but the alarm has had the good effect of giving a stimulus to the public mind, and has excited fresh attention to the cultivation of timber. The arguments of Mr. Evelyn, formerly Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital (whose excellent work, entitled *Sylva, or a Discourse on Forest Trees*, first appeared in 1664), and the excellent arrangements of Mr. Pepys,\* his great contemporary, Secretary to the Admiralty in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. have not failed of their effect. From that time, planting has become more and more general, and the growth of timber, both for private and national use, has been promoted in the woods of individuals, and in the King's forests. Let us not close our eyes to facts. Fifty sail of the line have

\* Pepys died in 1703, and Evelyn in 1706.



been launched within three or four years, and at this moment there are 90,000 loads of timber in the King's yards, and as much more contracted for; and there is an abundance in those of the merchants. And is it for this asserted deficiency of timber, that the natives of India are to wrest employment out of the hands of British shipwrights, and that Indian capital is to have a preference to that of Great Britain? Surely some plan may be devised to avert the anticipated evil; and since a participation in those benefits that belong to British subjects, is the point contested at present between the Company and the out-ports, a paramount duty falls upon the Legislature to provide that the interests of this country should be secured to its own people; and this as well for the reasons already given, as for some others, which it remains to state.

When we look at Java, our late acquisition, an island abounding with teak, it is clear that ships may be built there in any quantity. Under the direction of a foreman-shipwright and smith, with the help



of the artificers and labourers of the country, one of the finest ships in the Company's service, of 1200 tons burthen, was built in its vicinity, at Penang. Similar efforts will doubtless be made at an island affording greater facilities, unless some restrictions be devised, and some protecting regulations in favour of British ships and seamen take place, under the authority of the Legislature. In the marine yard at Bombay, there is not a single European workman; and if the skill of the native artificers may be estimated by the specimen which they have given us in the *Minden*, of 74 guns, it is very evident that they cannot fail to attain celebrity, encouraged and applauded as they have been by very high characters, and allowed to supersede the shipwrights of Great Britain, as though our artificers had become ignorant of the science to which they were bred; or as though it were more beneficial to this country to pay Indian workmen, than to throw business into the hands of our own people. A procedure this, which militates against every principle of policy and patriotism.

Not many years ago, when Indiamen



had completed their number of voyages in the Company's employments, they were frequently sold for the country service; being then nearly the largest vessels in that trade. The case is now altered. Those noble structures, which were once accounted the boast of Europe, have been reared throughout India. Without that grave deliberation, or that reference to future consequences, which an innovation so momentous obviously demanded; dock-yards and arsenals have been established there, by those who are resident in that country, through the permission of the East India Company; and a race of men, remarkable for the want of mental energy and physical strength, have been taught to excel in a branch of mechanics which they never could have carried to such a pitch of perfection, without the impolitic tuition of a class of people who should have reserved to Europeans an art which has so powerfully contributed to the subjugation of the Asiatic provinces. At present, individual ships are built there; but whole fleets may be furnished if required, and hereafter may be disposed of to those



with whom Britons may one day have to contend for their maritime rights, and the empire of the sea.

How far such measures can be reconciled with those which prudence would dictate ; how far it may be thought proper to continue, or to limit them—will be, it is hoped, the subjects of the most attentive consideration ; and will not fall to the decision of those whose predilections in favour of Indian exertion and talent, have excited and encouraged such surprising and such alarming efforts. Least of all, should the discussion of these points be left to those governments in India which, in decided opposition to British interests, have indiscreetly afforded the means of bringing us to a crisis so replete with danger.

The question of building ships in India is a measure which may furnish employment for the most vigorous intellects of our first statesmen, who should coolly view it in all its bearings, and contemplate its ultimate issue. It is not yet too late to attend to it. It will yet admit of some wholesome modifications.



At all events, our naval resources here should not suffer diminution, nor should the means of rendering them useful to the state be crippled. They are of vital importance in all their ramifications. None of them should be suffered to fall into decay. They may all be put in requisition on some great emergency. This is the era of political changes. We must be prepared against all hostile attempts. It will be too late to set about renewing our establishments at the moment when our entire force may be called into action.

Having noticed the rivalry that subsists between this country and India in those objects of commerce which may be deemed British manufactures; and the unnatural preference given to those goods now fabricated in India, originally of British invention, and brought to their present perfection by British labour and ingenuity; it may not be amiss to attempt the solution of so strange a circumstance. It is certainly the duty of the governing power at home to encourage the colonists abroad; but this must never be done to the prejudice of the native subjects of any country. But if



Góvernment has been inattentive to this principle, can it be expected that the residents in the Peninsula and its dependencies should much regard them? Many of those persons have quitted the British islands in early life; they have formed new habits, and are become partial to the people amongst whom they live; they are proud of the ingenuity manifested by the natives, and regard it as a proof of their own efficiency, and the fruit of their own patronage; they are not uninfluenced by certain motives of economy; and at last they become rivals of their fellow-subjects, and cultivate interests ultimately detrimental to the well-being, and destructive of the mercantile prosperity of the land of their nativity. On the return of such persons to Great Britain, can we wonder that they retain those habits which have thus generated a second nature? Can we wonder, that in the capacity of opulent individuals, or, eventually, Directors of the India Company, or members of the Legislature, they should praise the adroitness of the natives of India in the fabrication of manufactures, the competency of the



country and its inhabitants to produce them, and the cheapness of labour in our Oriental provinces. This discussion, operating in a certain way on the human mind, may be deemed metaphysical and impertinent to the subject of these pages; but it is presumed that it has a practical bearing on the whole of the argument. The more of truth it may discover, the more should it put the executive government on its guard against the probable consequences of these predilections, and impel our statesmen to adopt such measures as may secure to this country all the advantages derivable from the employment of its artisans in their respective branches of manual labour. It is granted that gentlemen who have long resided in India must have acquired much valuable general information; of this it is most proper that the country should avail itself: but it must ever take care to fence round its manufacturing interests with such barriers as may resist the efforts of those, who, without any criminal intention, and swayed merely by habitual partialities, may be induced to place them in circumstances of hazard.



If ships are to be built throughout India, and are to be entitled to British registers, they will be numerous beyond all expectation; the artificers of this country must either emigrate or starve; and the revenue will suffer most serious diminution. By way of elucidating this argument, let us examine the single article of hemp. This, in its raw state, pays a duty of 9% per ton; but it is obvious that as a consequence of the improvement and consumption of Indian canvas and cordage, whilst our home-manufacturers are injured, the duties must be lessened, and the deficiency must be made up by other taxes; at the same time, it is obvious that the revenue must suffer an additional loss in the amount of those indirect taxes paid by the labourers in all they consume. The same reasoning applies to every other case of manufactures encouraged in the colonies, of whatsoever nature they may be.

One might be induced to cherish a hope, that facts so self-evident as these could not be overlooked by our statesmen; but experience too plainly proves the contrary;



as is most evident from what has been already pointed out. The naval department has but too industriously seconded the endeavours of the Indian residents to supply those articles manufactured in the colonies, which ought to have been furnished by Great Britain:—dangerous and most erroneous system, to be deplored by all true patriots; and to be amended, curbed, or altered without loss of time, if it be not grown too inveterate to be meddled with. If the evils attending it cannot be removed, at least care should be taken that they may not be aggravated or increased. It is easier, however, to prevent mischiefs of this kind, than to suppress them.

The war has been urged as a plea for the adoption of measures confessedly impolitic; and it is held out that they are but of a temporary nature. Arrangements of this kind, however, are commonly more permanent than the generality suppose, or some people will admit. When trade has taken a determinate course, it is difficult to shut up those channels which have been formed. But the existence of war furnishes a strong argument against the inno-



vations complained of: for how is it possible that those who are obliged to contribute to its support, directly or indirectly, can enter into competition with the colonists, who may follow all sorts of trades *ad libitum*, without being burthened by an hundredth part of those imposts which the inhabitants of the mother-country are bound to pay. It has been computed that they are obliged to part with half their income to the state. Dr. Price estimated their contributions at 15s. in the pound; and however aggravated his calculation once appeared, subsequent events have proved it to be correct. When we take the increase of population into the account; the impolicy of those measures which, by depriving thousands of employment, render it impossible for them to pay taxes, is most evident; and one cannot but be astonished at the infatuation which occasions a loss of 75*l.* per cent. in the payments of the bulk of the laborious classes to the Exchequer. It may be granted that certain articles of Indian manufacture may be purchased at a lower rate than the higher price of labour, occasioned by the



taxes which Government receives; will permit this country to charge; but it is to be considered that by throwing multitudes out of employment, the country is so far from gaining by all this, that it is demonstrably a loser: and at the same time it ought to be remembered, that the money lost to the mother-country is gained by the colonies, who are thus in a more alarming degree enabled to rival that state whose support should be the joint object of all its subjects at home and abroad

It is also matter worthy of consideration, that in every beneficial undertaking in this country, Government becomes, as it were, a partner without risk, sharing in the proportion of 10%. per cent. on the profits; whence an immense sum accrues to the revenue;—still further increased, when the accumulation of money descends from the original merchant to his representatives, direct, collateral, or more remote. The amount of the legacy-duty is prodigiously great. But before this final distribution of acquired property takes place, we must form an estimate of the sums resulting to the state from the legal securities required



for the use of large portions of this money, in the form of bonds, leases, and agreements of various sorts, which are all legalized and rendered obligatory by stamps of various sorts, which pay a duty *ad valorem*. Can such substantial benefits as these be given up without due consideration? Will the revenue be increased by rashly transferring the employment of our manufactories to the natives of India?

If the object be economy; and we are merely to look at the primary cost of manufactured articles; let us pursue this argument a little farther, and let us see to what conclusions it will lead us. If it be right that India is to supply us with shipping at a cheap rate; by the same rule Russia may furnish us with canvas, cordage, leather, and soap; Germany may send us linens; Italy and France may fill our markets with wrought silks; and Spain, instead of supplying us with wool, may have the wisdom to put its looms in motion, and send us broad-cloths. We know from sad experience the perfection to which France has brought her woollen manufactures, and the brilliance and excellence of



her dyes; and we have already suffered from her exertions in that traffic which was once called the Staple of England, by means of which she shut us out from that mine of wealth—the Levant and Turkey trade. If it be right to import manufactured articles of prime importance from India, it must be equally so to import them from the countries here enumerated, and other nations on the continent of Europe. If cheapness is to be counted the first object, we can freight foreign vessels with foreign goods at a lower rate than we can lade British bottoms; and if so, what will become of the nursery for our seamen? All those great points now at issue between us and the Scourge of the civilized world must be given up; the object of the present war must be conceded to our unrelenting enemy; the continental system of Bonaparte, as far as we are concerned, must be assumed for good policy; the sun of British prosperity must set for ever; our wooden walls must rot in our ports; and we shall soon become so poor as to require no importation of any sort, and so sunk in an utter prostration of national energy, as



to furnish no exports whatever. It cannot surely be necessary to add a syllable more on this part of the argument.

However attached any man may be to the interests of the East India Company, however zealous in support of their independence; however he may advocate the renewal of their Charter, and the security of their ancient immunities and privileges: it must be his bounden duty to protest against the prevailing errors of the times, which cannot fail, if persisted in, to endanger the prosperity of the Company, and to lead to the disorganization of those colonies which have been the envy of other nations, and the source of immense advantage to Great Britain.

Respecting the operation of those causes which may lead to the eventual independence of our Indian colonies, it may be permitted to add a few words. The prospect of returning to their native land, after having realized a competency abroad, has always induced the residents in India to look homeward with affection, and to respect the stability of that country's prosperity which is to be their resting place



after the fatigues of active life. To keep up in the minds of their servants an affectionate feeling towards Britain, was long an object of the wise policy pursued by the Company. This cement is now dissolved; this tie is now broken. The Company has been obliged to reduce the emoluments of its servants, and administer its affairs on a more contracted, not to call it a parsimonious scale. The urgency of affairs, which has induced the Company to adopt these measures, has been unquestionably great; but it must ever be deplored, that any temporary pressure should have caused them to narrow their remunerations to such a degree, as to hazard a disunion of interest between the parent state and her Indian colonies. The late minister for India always relied upon the strong bond of affection which the hope of returning home maintained between the colonists and their native land. May India never become to England what South America is to Spain! The ancient liberality and enlarged policy, observed by the Government of India, are at an end! The impoverished state of the Indian



finances made some retrenchment necessary; but the civil servants of the Company have undergone such privations as have lowered their consequence and authority in the estimation of the natives. They have even incurred debts which reduce them to a state of dependency on those who ought to look up to them for protection. The servants of the Company must consequently grow lukewarm in their affection for Britain. The residents feel themselves almost expatriated. Their number, which is perhaps already too great, must certainly increase, if the flood-gates of the out-ports shall be opened; this will only tend the more to lessen the legitimate opportunities of realizing fortunes; home will be less and less thought of, and every inducement to separate the colonies from the mother country will act with the greater force.

Thus the economy so urgently pressed in this country, and carried rigidly into effect in Asia, had produced most distressing effects. It has created a sensation of disaffection and estrangement, which it <sup>vade</sup> be very difficult to remove. memes



The general principles of colonization have been laid down, and their bearing on our Indian policy examined. A case has been made out, claiming the consideration of Parliament, which, it is presumed, will secure to the Proprietors of East India Stock a renewal of their Charter, with certain modifications. The errors of the Court of Directors have been noted, it is hoped, without asperity ; and the deviation from the wise system established in 1802, for the cheap transit of goods to and from India, has been explained. The incalculable injury sustained by the revenue, and the British artificers and manufacturers, by employing the natives of Hindostan, and the unrestrained introduction of Indian shipping, together with the probable consequences of this most dangerous measure, has been clearly set forth.—It is therefore with confidence that the author looks to the united wisdom of the Legislature for such enactments as will secure the government of India on sound colonial principles, and preserve the advantages derived from the present system ;—such as will give to the British merchant and manufacturer every



facility (compatible with higher advantages) in the transit of goods to and from India, and the remittance of private fortunes, by the *permanent* establishment of a class of ships on the principles laid down in 1802; and, at the same time, will protect the interests of the British ship-owner, manufacturer, and artisan, and provide for the consequent prosperity of the country, by such duties on the Indian shipping and manufactures, as are equivalent to the taxes, direct or indirect which affect the same manufactures in this country.

The French East India Company once partook of the commercial advantages derivable from their settlements in the Peninsula. The laying open their trade occasioned first the ruin of the Company, and was afterward followed by that of the private adventurers who sought, on plausible grounds, an admission to their exclusive privileges. The British East India Company have now gained possession of the factories once held by their ancient enemies, and have likewise driven from the East every competitor for the trade of Hindostan. May no delusive schemes



of wild speculation place our acquisitions in jeopardy ! May the events of past times, and the misfortunes of other nations, make us wise ere it be too late ! Nothing is so dangerous as to try experiments on states. Let us know when we are well off, and let us be admonished by the victim of empiricism, who, though dead, speaks most sensibly from the tomb :

“ I was well ;  
 I would be better ;  
 I took physic,  
 And here I lie.”

THE END.



















